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ABSTRACT

The 53 best articles from "Case Currents" on student recruitment marketing are presented. The importance of a marketing plan and ways to apply basic marketing principles to recruitment programs are explained. Eight sections cover: exploring the marketing concept; conducting market research and putting the data to work; reaching out to recruit adults and others; using personal approaches in recruitment programs; involving students and alumni to recruit students; communicating effectively through publications; creating memorable film and slide shows; and building audience awareness through advertising. Specific topics include: reaching unenrolled applicants and students who have never graduated; a management vs. sales model; using research to help the marketing program succeed; research that helps students choose the right college; comparing face-to-face, mail, and telephone surveys; taking classes to shopping centers; recruiting two-year college graduates; increasing the school's applicant pool; a campus visit for students; communicating through catalogs; test for clear writing; a college audiovisual show; the importance of the soundtrack to a college slide show; and knowing the institution and the market before advertising. (SW)

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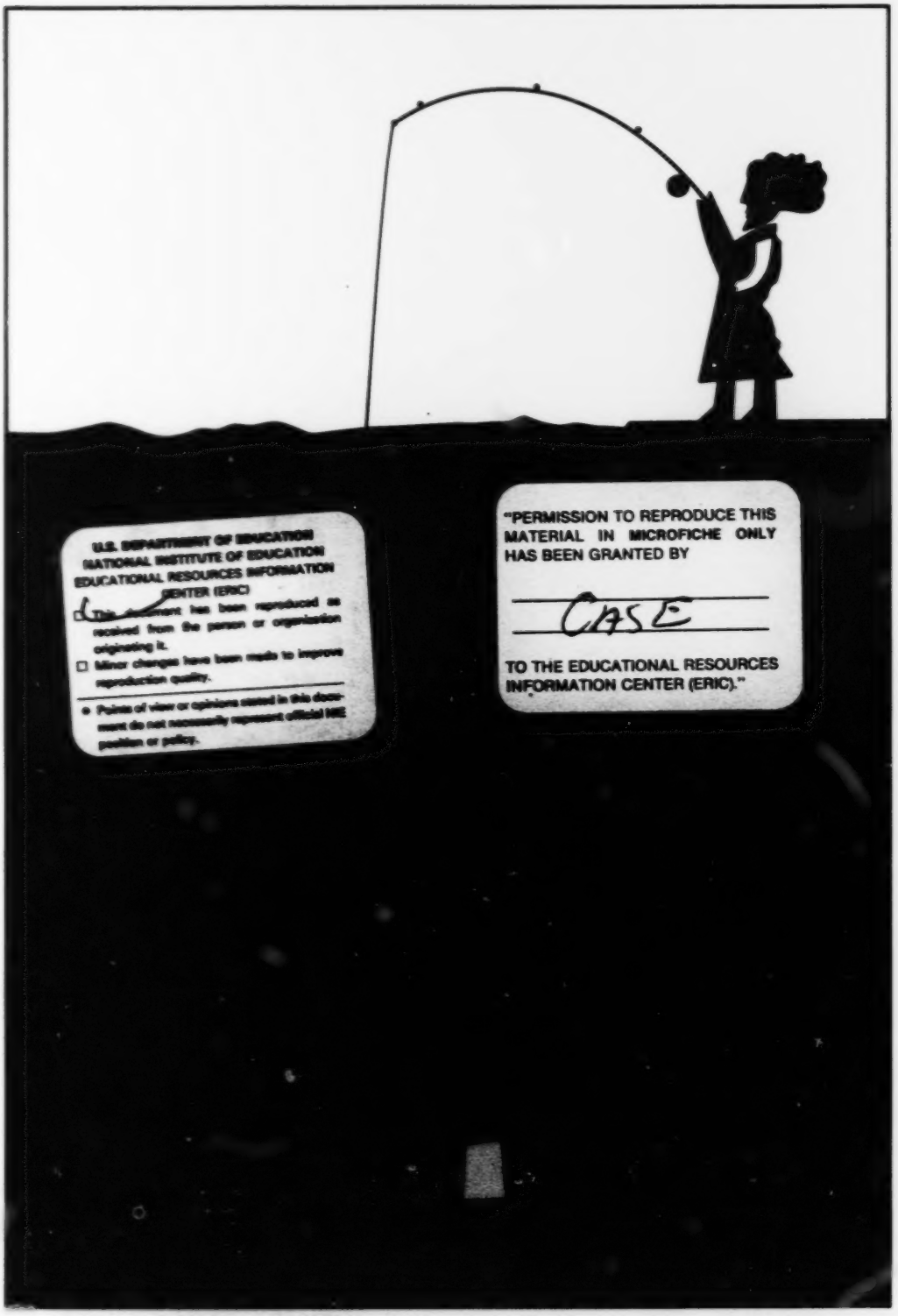
The New Guide to Student Recruitment Marketing

Virginia Carter Smith and Susan Hunt, Editors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The Best of CASE CURRENTS

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Choice Comments

Eight students tell what really influenced their college decisions

My father would say I chose Whitworth College because of my inbred tendency to spend large amounts of money—his money. He claims that between my tuition payments and my mother's visits to the beauty salon, he doesn't have to worry about deciding how to spend his monthly paycheck.

My mother would love to credit my Whitworth decision to my insatiable love of flying the friendly skies. Whitworth is located in Spokane, Washington, more than 600 miles from my hometown on the Oregon coast. This situation accomplishes two objectives: I fly a lot, and, in doing so, spend more of my dad's money.

But what is my real reason for choosing Whitworth over, say, the University of Japan (not considering my inability to converse in Japanese or my dislike of kimonos)? During my first two years after high school graduation, I was enrolled at five different colleges. The first two didn't offer a degree in my field of interest, nutrition. Whitworth does. The last three were too large for a 19-year-old going through an identity crisis. (Who would notice another green-eyed dishwater blonde on a campus of 536 other green-eyed dishwater blondes?)

Whitworth, on the other hand, is a small, private college. The limited enrollment allows students and faculty to develop close relationships. My faculty adviser is my psychiatrist and friend as well as my instructor. I know the names of everyone in my classes and, in turn, I'm not just another Tom, Dick, or Mary.

Retreats and other school activities further encourage deepening relationships. Also, having grown up on a farm, I appreciate Whitworth's broad, tree-lined campus. The common sight of squirrels and chipmunks reminds me of home on the range.

Why did I choose Whitworth? The campus is small and friendly, the location is beautiful, it offers a degree in nutrition—and besides, I have spendthrift tendencies and an insatiable love of flying.—*April Kuckuck, Whitworth College*

A picture of Duke University recently appeared on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* as an example of a "hot college." The news both pleased and surprised me. No one from my small hometown in Massachusetts had any idea how "hot" Duke was when I applied there four years ago. My guidance counselor told me of its academic reputation and of its balmy Southern weather, but nothing more than that.

Nonetheless, without even visiting Duke I was certain that I wanted to enroll. I applied for early admission and was accepted. Now, as a graduating senior, I'm happy that I came here. And in the game of college admissions, I may have gotten the last laugh.

I chose Duke because the glossy color brochure entranced me. All those pictures of good-looking kids in sweatshirts skipping across the quad. There was also a picture of a minority and a handicapped person talking together under a magnolia tree, which suggested to me that here was a place where appearances could be thrust aside for the pursuit of higher learning.

Ultimately, though, the name of the university as it was printed in Gothic letters convinced me. Not the name in the sense of reputation, but the name itself and its associations. *Duke* had such a solid, masculine sound to it. One syllable. The emphasis on the *k*. I pictured John Wayne and Doonesbury's Duke in rapid succession.

"Hey," I told my guidance counselor, "I want to gun-sling it on down there." —*William Webb, Duke University*

I don't know why, but a few months away from my associate degree, I'm still getting college recruitment materials in the mail.

All those cheery faces. All those spacious quads. All that high tuition.

The people who produce these publications probably went to these same sorts of institutions when they were students back in the '60s. Now, it seems, they're trying to sell me the same idea about a college education that they bought 20 years ago. Gothic architecture and campus ambiance, for example, still seem to count for a lot.

If the brochures are right, then I've made a big mistake.

The college I attend is housed in a converted factory building. The view from its front steps is a tangled urban landscape with the towers of Manhattan hovering just across the East River. The "wheels" I use to get to class each day are attached to a New York City subway train.

Not the stuff of your typical recruitment brochure—and just as well. The fact is, the things that go into a typical college advertising piece are just not the things which determined the choice of college for me—or anyone else I know.

When you come from a working-class family in the Bronx, as I do, you don't get much time to think about where you're going on spring break or who you're taking to the Big Game.

For me, college is where you get an education to get yourself to some place better in your life. That's what LaGuardia Community College offered me. And because it's a public institution, I can afford that education. It has a work/study internship program so I can test my career goals. Maybe I would make it anyway, but I'm not willing to risk it without a place like this behind me—whatever it looks like.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not knocking the people who can get themselves to the places I see in the brochures. It looks like a great way to go. But for me right now, I'm focused on getting an education, even if I don't feel like Joe College in the process.

And I'm going to make it. Twenty years from now, I'll look at the brochures colleges are sending out then. I'll show them to my kids. Maybe one of them will like what they see. *—Hector Santos, LaGuardia Community College*

As a high school sophomore, I was used to the thought of college. I had spent a good deal of time at Arizona State University because my mom worked there; I enjoyed "hanging out with the big kids," eating at the Memorial Union, reading the *State Press,* and relaxing on the lawn.

I knew that I could get into ASU if I wanted, but I felt that college should be something more grandiose and awe-inspiring. Perhaps my views were a bit anachronistic, but I secretly hoped that I could find a school where the professors wore their doctoral robes to class and the students made allusions to Virgil and Milton during the football games.

One day during my junior year, I skipped chemistry class to attend a recruitment presentation about Claremont McKenna College. When I left the session, I was hooked; I felt as though I'd found the 20th-century version of a classical college experience.

At 800 students, CMC promised an intimacy that could not be found in most larger colleges' introductory psychology classes. The prospect of knowing all of my schoolmates by name was enticing; certainly it was like that when Jonathan Swift or William Penn went to school.

Then there was the fact that TA's weren't used in any of the classes. Pupils could assimilate scholarly wisdom directly from the scholars. I noted the number of Rhodes and Fulbright scholars listed among the faculty, and wondered what we would talk about in class.

These points offset the expense of a small, private college. It seemed to me that CMC warranted its relative costliness because the quality of the education was measurably higher than at many other colleges.

The third feature that sold me was CMC's focus. The curriculum slants unabashedly toward economics and public policy. Since I wanted to go to law school, I approved. I was eager to get started learning political theory and constitutional law. I knew that the environment would help my communication skills—the catalog hinted at large requirements of written work for each class and boldly spelled out the senior thesis requirement. I selected CMC because its offerings matched my expectations. To my delight, I wasn't disappointed. *—Merrill Richmond, Claremont McKenna College*

Sitting in my American history class the other day, I was struck by an unfamiliar face at the next desk. Not only was the face unfamiliar, it was young. I wondered what a 15-year-old would be doing in a college history class.

When the youngster introduced himself to the professor as a high school senior looking into Colgate, I suddenly felt very old. I also grew a bit nostalgic, remembering fondly the days so long ago when I struggled with the decision of where to spend my next four years.

Before my mind wandered too far, the young man startled me again. Out of his briefcase he pulled Colgate's catalog, a checklist of all the people he was scheduled to meet that day, and other notes with his impressions of the campus, dorms, student life, etc. I marveled at his preparation.

While my professor lectured, I couldn't help thinking how my college choice contrasted with his. In making what was then the most important decision of my life, it seems I had not used any concrete criteria. I can only remember gazing across the beautiful campus with the scenic hills of central New York in the background and saying to myself, "This feels like a university should feel." Did I attend any classes? No. Did I meet with the baseball coach for whom I would play? No. Did I stay overnight in one of the dorms to get a first-hand glimpse of college life? No. For such a big decision, I had let my heart rule my head. Everything has worked out wonderfully over the past four years, but I must admit I felt a bit inferior to this high-schooler with his precise techniques.

As the class ended, I asked him if he had decided which school he would attend.

"Colgate," he said.

I asked him why, fully expecting him to list all the advantages he had compiled over his visit.

"I just like the feel of the place," he said.

With that, I didn't feel so bad after all.—*Dan Cost, Colgate University*

When my peers were waiting with fingers-crossed hopes for college admission notices, I was touring the United States as a member of the Joffrey II Dancers, the apprentice company of the Joffrey Ballet. Performance, rehearsal, and travel occupied my complete attention. College was something I might pursue when I was 29, or too old to be put on stage.

A day off near the end of our touring schedule changed that, however, and eventually prompted me to trade in my career as a professional ballet dancer for a backpack and notebook.

Our evening performance had been in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I took the opportunity to spend the next day visiting my brother and his wife, who lived nearby. It was a welcome chance to escape the all-too-familiar mediterranean prints and orange slice garnishes of yet another hotel.

In the morning, I accompanied my sister-in-law, a poet with the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop, to the campus in Iowa City. Joffrey II was scheduled to perform there later in the year, so I was happy to explore the university while she met with her thesis adviser.

Having no more to show for my education than a wallet-size diploma from a "You-too-can-be-a-high-school-graduate" correspondence school, I studied the building names for the one that seemed the least intimidating. I chose the main library.

As I entered the building, I had to pass through a turnstile. That routine act helped to put me at ease. "Just like the New York subway," I thought, only there was no bag lady to beg for quarters and no ungodly odors from underground hot dog stands.

As I approached the information desk, I found myself confronted by row upon row of card catalogs. Students I now recognize as freshmen glanced at me standing there in my white anklets and black high heels, clinging to my dance bag. Surely my alma mater was printed across my face like the matchbook covers on which it advertises.

I sifted through the cards in a randomly selected drawer, pretending I knew what I was looking for. I even pushed my bag over my shoulder like the others wore their backpacks. I watched the students. It seemed the air of the library was filled with an exciting secret, and I was the only one who didn't know about it.

One year and thousands of audience members later, I decided I wanted more than dancing with a major ballet company. I wondered what else I was interested in, perhaps even good at, besides ballet. It was then that I applied for admission to one university—the University of Iowa. —*Karin Hanson, University of Iowa*

If the primary reason you go to college is to broaden your mind, then consider this irony: Many of us chose our four years of mind expansion on the basis of how well a college fit the mental narrowness we possessed in high school.

In my case, senior year in high school found me wanting to study civil engineering. Why?

"Because it's a practical and challenging profession," I told my family and friends.

"Because I can tell my family and friends, 'It's a practical and challenging profession,' " I told myself.

The truth? The strongest reason I had for choosing my college was neither intellectual curiosity nor professional ambition—it was the need for social approval. As one equally confused—but honest—high school friend said, "Doing four years of college is more respectable than doing four years of prison." Yes, going to Penn State does look better than going to the state pen—but at least the convicts know why they're going.

I finally chose Drexel University for its nationally ranked engineering school. Now, as a college senior, I'm in Drexel's small but growing communications department. It isn't because I couldn't "hack" engineering; I realize now I never wanted to hack engineering in the first place.

When I graduate in June I will look back on my years at Drexel as years well spent, confident I can do with words and videotape what I could never do with I-beams and T-squares. I came to Drexel with the wrong questions, but fortunately, I feel I'm leaving with the right answers. Because of—and in spite of—Drexel, I've managed to stretch my mind and decide what to do with it.

Good schools, like good baseball caps, I suppose, have adjustable headbands.—*Paul Richard Kowal, Drexel University*

When I was in high school, I had a hard time deciding where I wanted to go to college. Actually, "where" wasn't the only problem. The real question was what I'd study once I got there.

I've always liked sports, so I initially considered education. I ruled out that idea, however, because I didn't want to be a gym teacher or a coach. Next I thought about architecture because I enjoyed drawing buildings. I also considered a business degree because I liked the idea of being involved with, and possibly owning, a business.

I never really considered engineering. Engineering was only something that my hometown college—the University of Missouri-Rolla—specialized in, and going to college in my hometown didn't seem a particularly exciting prospect.

Since I played basketball and softball in high school, I figured I would go to a college that offered me an athletic scholarship. When those letters didn't come pouring in, I decided I had better rethink my options.

I thought I had narrowed my choices down to pursuing a business degree, but I still wasn't sure which school to choose. That was when my father told me about the engineering management program at UMR.

This program combines courses in management with course work in a specialized field of engineering. I went to a few recruitment presentations at UMR and decided that with my interest in business and buildings, the program was worth looking into.

I eventually enrolled at UMR as an engineering management major with an emphasis in civil engineering. And by playing both basketball and softball for UMR, I fulfilled another dream.

As a senior, I realize now that I made the right choice of a college, course of study, and career. I'm looking forward to graduating and getting a job as a management engineer.

I guess going to college in your hometown *can* be exciting.
—*Cecilia Gutierrez, University of Missouri-Rolla* cnse

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Section 1
Marketing: Exploring the Concept

Going to Market

How to create and implement a master marketing plan for your campus
by Robert S. Topor

Try this test of your institution's marketing plan.

Gather up all the outreach materials your institution publishes. Take the recruitment brochures, the direct mail pieces for fund raising, the alumni periodicals. Pull out a copy of the president's last speech, your faculty-staff newsletter, the graduate school announcement. Don't forget your institution's mission statement and the copy for the next admissions slide show.

Lay all these materials out on a large table, and look at them.

If your institution has a master marketing plan, all these materials will appear well-coordinated. Each piece will include vital information about your institution. Each will have clear visual, graphic, and editorial continuity. And each will target information to discrete audiences.

If your institution does not have a total strategy in place, it will be obvious. The outreach materials will appear uncoordinated, unrelated, or even conflicting. This is a sure sign that your institution needs a comprehensive marketing plan.

Many institutions are developing marketing plans to solve problems, to head off possible problems, or simply to improve their positions in the competitive educational marketplace.

A marketing plan cuts across traditional boundaries. By nature, educational institutions are organized vertically—by departments, colleges, and curricula. An idea that cuts horizontally across these lines—as a total marketing approach should—can be difficult to introduce.

There is no *one* place where a marketing plan begins. It could start in the admissions office, the development office, the alumni office—and at any level of administration. The important thing is that it begin someplace.

How to activate the campus

Go back to the materials on the table. You may be able to use these publications to illustrate the need for a coordinated marketing plan.

Then start building support by enlisting your vice president. Next, talk with your president. Once you've piqued their interest, look into holding a meeting of the most influential people on campus. Create a presentation to explain the reasons for developing a marketing plan.

You may want to tell these people that a consistent marketing approach brings results greater than the simple total of the parts. Consider including ideas from Philip Kotler's book, *Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations,* which explains how the latest concepts and strategies of marketing apply to the nonprofit field.

You may also want to summarize ideas about audience segmentation, positioning, competition, image building, research, or the four P's (product, place, price, and promotion).

Above all, it's important to describe the results one can expect from a well-developed marketing plan. The plan should result in direct benefit to everyone in your audience. You should make clear what those benefits are, and how combining and targeting your efforts will increase their impact.

Who gets involved

A well-executed marketing plan will touch the lives and activities of practically everyone on your campus at one time or another. It's important, then, to involve as many people as possible.

First work on the opinion leaders on your campus. Who are the key board members? faculty members? administrators? students? alumni?

Different campuses choose different approaches. Some institutions form marketing committees. Others rely on a central individual to introduce marketing concepts.

You may want to create a task force to study marketing opportunities on your campus. Perhaps some key faculty members in the business school have an interest in marketing for nonprofit organizations. (A word of caution: The concepts of marketing nonprofit organizations are quite new—perhaps a dozen years old—so don't be surprised if some of your suggestions meet with blank stares!)

Your task force should consider your institution's political, educational, administrative, and managerial environment, and choose the most practical approach for your situation.

The importance of research

Marketing is a cyclical process that begins and ends with research. From the beginning, market research helps you assess the needs, perceptions, and attitudes of your target audiences. You can use research to examine broad topics (such as your institution's image) or narrow ones (say, audience needs for a specific summer institute).

Many institutions use market research in creating outreach communications pieces. For example, your admissions office may want to field test a new search mailer. You might see how a group of potential students reacts to the mailer's content or design. This kind of research is called focus group research: when a leader elicits reactions from small groups of people representing a larger target audience.

Similarly, some institutions use market research to assess attitudes toward the institution in order to improve alumni, development, and admissions activities. Solid market research can be invaluable in providing the framework for marketing planning and implementation.

Research is necessary both in planning marketing and in evaluating a plan after it's implemented. And follow-up research can suggest ways to make your approaches more efficient and effective.

Creating the marketing plan

The best marketing plans describe both objectives and methods for all appropriate areas within the institution. Your plan may include strategies for the academic area, admissions, alumni, development, student affairs, community relations, government relations—or any other areas important to your institution.

The marketing plan for each of

Robert S. Topor is the director of marketing communications at Sharp Health System in San Diego, California. Topor is the author of Marketing Higher Education: A Practical Guide.

these components should follow the same basic outline:

1. *Research.* Describe conclusions gathered from market research as they relate to the component as well as to the parent institution. Note relationships and implications of the research.
2. *Planning assumptions.* State directly the institution's missions and the plans for the component to clarify the component's direction for the future.
3. *Goals.* Describe the institution's goals for the component.
4. *Objectives.* List the component's ambitions, in order of priority. Compare the component's ambitions with the institution's goals. Are they compatible? If not, consider ways to resolve the differences.
5. *Target audiences.* Identify the component's target audiences. The list may include primary, secondary, and tertiary audience groups.
6. *Strategies.* Discuss the logical approaches for reaching the target audiences in order to achieve the marketing goals and objectives. Derive your strategies from studying the first five items on this list.
7. *Media mix.* Suggest a combination of "vehicles" for delivering your marketing strategies. These media may differ from one component to another in order to take advantage of the most efficient and effective means of communication in each case.

Applying the plan

When you are preparing to market a particular program or product, you should then consider the four P's. Ask yourself these questions:

- In what ways do you need to adapt your *product* (curriculum, conference offerings, service programs, or whatever) to meet audience needs?
- How can you make the most of your location *(place)?* Should you offer some programs elsewhere?
- Are adjustments in *price* necessary? Are they possible?
- How will you *promote* your products to your target audiences?

Closing the circle

As I mentioned, marketing is a cyclical process. It begins with, and returns to, market research. Research defines marketing objectives, which lead to a marketing plan. After you implement the plan, you evaluate the results with research, and the whole process starts over again.

Not only does the process never end, but it also constantly changes as the components involved undergo their own changes. The process is interactive as well: The constant interchange among the many areas involved increases the benefits to all. That synergy applies to the organization as a whole as well as to each of the subunits.

As higher education moves toward new challenges, many institutions will look to marketing as a source of order. Marketing is an effective tool for improving relationships with both internal staffs and external constituents. But marketing works best when developed as a comprehensive, complete, institution-wide system. By organizing, planning, researching, and controlling the way you apply your ideas, you can achieve greater results than would otherwise be possible. **CASE**

Admissions Needs You

Make student recruitment a PR priority
by George C. Debne

Is your public relations program supporting student recruitment efforts? Or are you and your staff spending all of your time on media relations, publications, and special events that have little connection with building enrollment?

All too often, we respond to an institutional visibility problem by throwing another publication at it. Or we measure the success of a symposium by whether it's covered by the *New York Times.* We don't step back and ask: Does this publication, release, or event support student recruitment?

George C. Debne is the president of Admissions Marketing Group, Inc., a market research, communications, and public relations firm in Boston, Massachusetts. Formerly he was director of college relations and ad hoc director of marketing for Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.

Obviously, this has to change if public relations professionals are going to succeed in a time when the student pool is dwindling. Of course, media relations and publications play crucial roles in public relations. But they are a means to an end. And that end must include student recruitment.

Admissions Marketing Group (AMG) research, gleaned from studies of parents, students, and counselors across the nation, suggests several reasons why public relations professionals should play a major role in the recruitment picture:

- About 50 percent of the high school students we surveyed say they will attend colleges they knew about before they entered their junior year in high school. This means even a well-constructed direct mail publication sent in the spring of the junior year will have little or no impact on a large segment of the market.
- The institution's name recognition, its location, and the recruitment piece's technical approach (envelope size, personalized letter, etc.) are the main factors that lead students to open and read a direct mail package (such as SEARCH or EOS, the ACT direct mail program). Name recognition has by far the greatest impact.
- High-ability and affluent students are more likely to attend college far from home. But, of course, this group is the most status-conscious.
- High school counselors contend that students get most of their information about colleges in school and from friends, college guidebooks, and the counseling staff.
- Students use tangible evidence to determine the quality of a college. They consider, for example, the percentage of faculty members who hold Ph.D.'s, the physical appearance of the campus, the percentage of students who go to graduate school or find jobs, and the success of alumni.
- Establishing an institution's quality becomes more essential as students, in a buyer's market, take more risks and "move up" to what they perceive to be better colleges.

• Approximately 70 percent of almost all colleges' inquiry pools consists of "ghosts" (students who are no longer interested before the fall of their senior year). We assume that they reject colleges that have little visibility or prestige in their region even if their initial contact created interest.

Where to start

You don't have to be a wizard to see that the recruitment process must begin long before the admissions office sends out its first mailing. These days, direct mail allows your college's message to get into the homes of most eligible college-bound students. Unfortunately, an institution's lack of visibility or credibility often makes the message meaningless.

Here's where you as a PR professional can help—*if* you learn to think differently. Stop thinking about such tools as publications, publicity, and special events. Instead, think name recognition, positioning, and imaging. Concentrating on these marketing concepts helps you achieve your institution's student recruitment goals. Here's what to do:

• *Achieve name recognition.* The old adage "I don't care what they say about me as long as they spell my name right" certainly applies here. Initiate and support activities that help make your institution's name familiar to the prospective student. When the prospect sees your college's booth at the high school fair or receives a mailing from your admissions office, you want him or her to think, "Oh! I've heard of this college."

The message is less important than the recognition. Naturally, you hope that students and parents view your institution positively. But the truth is, if no one's heard of you, you've got an enormous problem.

• *Position your institution.* It's true that you are known by the company you keep. Otherwise, why would American Express feature prominent card-holders in its commercials? Being linked with highly visible and popular individuals or institutions says more about your quality than puffy words.

If your college is "world class," make certain it's linked with world-class people or organizations. For instance, devise a plan to have the college choir perform with a major orchestra. Ask a famous alumnus to lecture on campus. Or make certain that the publication talented high school students read mentions your campus in a positive way.

• *Pay attention to institutional image.* Make certain you are seen as you wish to be seen. No one is going to say nice things about you unless you do it yourself. On the other hand, it's important to know what you wish to say. Imaging involves explaining or neutralizing the myths surrounding your institution. It could also include determining what image you want and then developing ways to support it.

For instance, if you want your institution to be viewed as "intellectual," you need to know what that term means to 18-year-olds. Then you need to devise a way to present the concept in their terms.

Of course, the activities to achieve name recognition, position, and image may overlap. Hometown stories, for example, can give your college name recognition. If the student mentioned in the article was well known in high school and the community, the college gains positioning and image advantages as well.

The name is the thing

Name recognition may be the simplest and least expensive of the three concepts. But it's also the most important. For example, providing free services to high school students, teachers, and guidance counselors can help you achieve name recognition.

An information-processing theory of consumer behavior suggests that consumers will react positively to a service or product even if it is irrelevant to the consumer. According to this theory, a person enjoying the Olympics on TV will probably appreciate a product listed as an official sponsor of the 1984 Summer Games. By extension, an American history student may well respond positively to your institution if a member of your faculty wrote his or her textbook.

Colleges have already caught on. For example, the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA) distributed a poster featuring a glossary of college terms like "humanities" and "room and board" to high school counselors. Generic and impartial in nature, the poster included the names and addresses of the 13 member colleges. Because of an encouraging response from counselors, GLCA has since produced a similar booklet for students.

Likewise, Allegheny College produced a poster and pamphlet entitled "Financial Aid Simplified" for students. Other colleges have produced glossaries of election and geological terms, and one has created a poster featuring musical symbols. For colleges associated with different religious denominations, we developed a poster, "Why a Church-related College," for distribution to churches. The posters have no promotional value except the line "A Service of X College."

The possibilities for generating name recognition are limitless, and the process is the educational equivalent of printing your institution's name on a pen. But it's an important PR aid to student recruitment.

Where you are counts

Before you tackle positioning, first assess what organizations, people, or things your institution wishes to be linked with. For instance, if your institution wants to be positioned as strong in science, it should award an honorary degree to a Nobel Prize-winning scientist. Or determine a strategy that will ensure you are mentioned along with colleges or universities you consider peers or better.

Admissions officers already travel in groups to enhance visibility. And they position themselves with officers from colleges with which they want to be associated. Public relations people should consider doing the same.

For example, when I was director of college relations at Carleton College, we set up an informal media relations network with three other highly selective colleges, Swarthmore, Oberlin, and Pomona. We then produced national roundup news stories for distribution to selected media. National media picked up our stories on the return of religion to campus and on new ways of counseling students who failed to get into medical school.

In your region, you may find that a certain radio station appeals particularly to high school students. To position yourself with the station, cosponsor a Walk-a-Thon for Muscular Dystrophy or a radio series offering tips for teen-agers. It is the cosponsorship you want, not just the visibility. Also consider providing tours, handouts, or exhibits to a museum that's popular for high school field trips.

Do you have a well-done publication on how to select a college, why

students should attend a private (or public, as the case may be) college, or how to pay for college? Consider offering such a publication as a free service to students through a paid advertisement in *Seventeen, Glamour,* or *Sports Illustrated.* Even better, convince the magazine to sponsor the ad with you. You can invite students to attend campus musical and theatrical events through an advertisement in the programs for young people's concerts.

In short, make sure you're seen in the right publications and with the right organizations.

The right look registers

Maintaining or creating the image you want is more difficult than achieving name recognition and position. Image may seem superficial, but don't underestimate its value in this highly image-conscious society.

Obviously, before you can project the image you want, you must decide what it is. If your institution has not conducted an image study, consider one. Or contract with a firm to do one for you. It will tell you how you are perceived by your major constituencies and what benefits prospective students and their parents are seeking. It will also tell you how your constituencies view your institution's unique characteristics and what changes or changed emphasis would make your institution more attractive to prospective students.

Otherwise, look to your president, admissions office, and available institutional research for clues on how the institution wants or needs to appear.

You may find that your institution's image is based on reality. Or it may, in fact, be a fallacious view held by several publics. For instance, it's possible that you think your institution has a strong academic reputation when actually it's viewed as a finishing school. Jotting down negative and positive impressions of your institution makes it easier to determine the most important image questions to address.

Once you've determined what your image is, you need either to support it or alter it, depending on how closely it jibes with the image you want. For example, if your publics think of your institution as small and isolated, you might need to focus on the advantages of rural location and ease of student access to urban areas.

Techniques for establishing an image cut across several areas. Of course, national and regional publicity gained through the media offers great advantages. Outside consultants can help you establish the appropriate image through the mass media. However, *you* must help them determine the most important issues.

Service products like those described in the name recognition section can also be useful imaging tools. For example, one institution had a reputation in music and art but was rarely thought of for science. One of our clients prepared a glossary of mathematical terms, printed them on three-hole-punched laminated sheets, and offered them to high school math teachers to distribute to classes. The only mention of the institution was the line "Compliments of X College."

One small institution hoped to position itself as a college that focused on the future. It wished to be seen as a place for the practical idealist and wanted to highlight its strong tradition in the social sciences. We produced for the college a 20-minute videotape on voting behavior in America and the dangers for the future if low voter turnout continues. Before the 1984 presidential elections, the college offered to lend the tape to the 500 most important "feeder" high schools. More than 150 high school social studies teachers requested it.

Among Minnesota high school students, Carleton College had a reputation for being a humorless, unfriendly "pressure cooker." So we focused attention on photographs that demonstrated the lighter side of the college. A student on eight-foot stilts in cap and gown made the AP wire, and a Santa Claus on cross country skis received national attention via UPI. In our admissions publications, we spotlighted Carleton traditions such as Rottblatt (a game that loosely resembles softball), the Pepped Banned (a kazoo band that marches on to the football field in its famous breaded veal cutlet formation), and "the tunnels" (underground passages that feature some of the nation's finest graffiti).

First step: Begin

Images aren't built in a day. Concentrate on building or changing one or two aspects at a time. You will have little or no results if you try to improve in all areas at once. Pick your messages and targets, then stay with them until you believe they are having an impact.

OK, I know what you're thinking. "How can I do this and all the other things I have to do, too?" The answer: You can't. Providing a useful service to the admissions area in recruitment and meeting the needs of the development office as well require zero-based planning. Assume you must build a program strictly around name recognition, positioning, and imaging. Review everything you and your office do. How many of these functions actually meet the required goals? Chuck the ones that don't (if you can).

Finally, concentrate on high-yield activities. It is better to get the greatest mileage out of two or three major activities each year than to do several poorly and without the desired impact.

Student recruitment officers will soon be tapping on your door asking for help—if they aren't already. Refocusing your strategies now will help you and your institution thrive. CASE

Get Everyone into the Recruitment Act

Keeping F&M "highly selective" is an institution-wide concern
by Bruce G. Holran and Richard Kneedler

What happens in the admissions office should no longer concern just the admissions director. It's an institutional concern—or at least it should be.

In these days of shifting demographics, how a college plans, sets priorities, and markets and sells can shape the institution for years to come. Planning, setting priorities, and marketing can even determine whether or not your college will survive.

To create an effective plan and marketing strategy, you need to involve administrators, faculty members, trustees, alumni, and students from the beginning. Each group needs to understand that it must subordinate individual and departmental concerns to those of the college.

How we planned

Although Barron's guidebook calls F&M "highly selective" (we receive 3,700 applications for a freshman class of 540), the college faces a competitive market for the best students in the Northeast. Our area will experience more than its share of the national shrinkage in the 18-year-old pool over the next 15 years. And F&M's principal competitors are some of the nation's best known and most highly endowed institutions.

Our challenge, then, is to build a sophisticated but realistic approach to marketing the college.

Our president and top leaders know that good planning means gathering and considering many opinions on issues. Doing so improves the chances that decisions will be carried out. That's why our admissions planning effort involves faculty, alumni, students, and administrators who do not usually deal directly with admissions questions.

To develop our planning efforts, we set up an administrative task force on admissions. This task force includes the college's four vice presidents; the director and associate director of admissions; and the directors of publications, public relations, alumni programs, and financial aid.

The goal of the task force, which cuts across traditional reporting lines, is to reach a common understanding of the college's admissions situation. The group also looks for ways to improve our admissions effort and the means to implement a plan.

The task force has proved itself as a cohesive working group. People whose work is critical to an admissions program's success have had a chance to be heard on some thorny problems.

How we solved problems

The first session, which focused on admissions and financial aid, set a model for the way the group tackled a dozen or so issues. The group:

- discussed a problem;
- analyzed data;
- explored alternative solutions;
- made a recommendation; and
- reached a decision.

Once the financial aid problem was clearly described, it didn't take long to plan strategies for handling it. The group suggested that the aid problem be discussed immediately with trustees, the alumni leadership, and the campus committee on budget priorities. The result of these discussions was an increase of 20 percent in the number of grants available to the fall '83 freshman class. That single decision, representing a significant allocation of institutional resources, has probably made the entire study process worthwhile.

Another problem the task force identified quickly was the way the college treated transfer applicants. Again, the group suggested new financial aid, housing, and other strategies to encourage, rather than discourage, a potentially valuable clientele.

A third problem was "yield," the proportion of prospective students accepting our offer of admission. The difficult task of sustaining yield became more manageable when we considered institution-wide solutions. These included personalizing the admissions process, making better and more extensive use of alumni, and involving faculty in new ways in the recruitment process.

The task force dealt with other issues, of course, but these illustrations show the extent to which admissions issues inevitably cut across organizational lines. The task force's collegial structure is as effective as it is because it lets participants identify problems and design solutions. No one feels left out.

How we involved faculty

Most faculty members give little thought to the admissions process—except when they decide that students are ill-prepared or fear that an institutional problem in attracting students might hurt their programs.

One of our task force's challenges was to increase faculty understanding of the admissions situation. We wanted them to offer helpful comments on problems and strategy and to understand new institutional approaches to admissions that could require their help.

The task force designed an effective three-step process to meet this goal. The steps involved:

1. *Reporting to the faculty.* Because the task force decided that every faculty member should have the chance to know more about the admissions program, reports on admissions became a regular feature of faculty meetings. Department chairpersons attended special meetings to hear the latest admissions research data.

2. *Writing a case study.* With help from the task force, the vice president with responsibility for admissions wrote a case study on F&M's admissions experience. It contained data on inquiries, applications, admissions, and yield. It distilled the results of follow-up surveys of admitted students, including those who decided to attend F&M and those who did not. It also included profiles of our major overlap institutions and copies of

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write-ups on F&M appearing in major college guides.

3. *Holding special faculty sessions.* The task force distributed the case study to faculty members who were invited to attend sessions to discuss the document. One session, open to all faculty members, was held in cooperation with the campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors. Another was for academic department chairs.

Many faculty members went out of their way to say that they appreciated the case study, had read it thoroughly, and felt much better informed about admissions. The case study was perhaps most valuable because it gave many faculty members the chance to learn a great deal about the college and the complexities of the admission process. It exploded many myths and cleared up misconceptions.

How group discussions helped

The executive board of the alumni council and a group of 25 administrators also discussed the case study. Again, the sessions were fruitful and resulted in many suggestions and insights.

We set up each case study discussion so that the group leader asked participants about their perceptions of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The leader also asked the directions F&M might take in the future.

Each discussion focused on more general issues than just admissions. Alumni, for instance, were quick to point out that they thought the college suffered from an "insecurity complex." They thought it had failed to develop the level of external recognition that it ought to command. And they volunteered to help with this problem.

Faculty and administrators were worried about attracting more intellectually motivated students, ensuring that the college's environment encouraged intellectual development, and reducing the pressure for grades that some felt was too prevalent on campus.

Perhaps the most interesting session of all was with a student group. To stimulate discussion, the task force prepared and distributed three one-page dialogues instead of the admissions case study. The first dialogue was between two students, one of whom had decided to transfer; the second was between a student and a parent on the subject of grades; and the third was between a student and a faculty member concerning the student's major plans.

We had expected students to focus on a perceived lack of social life. Instead, they talked about problems they had in scheduling courses they wanted and needed. Indeed, when they did talk about social life, they said they believed the college had no obligation to provide them with additional social outlets.

The most encouraging outcome of our entire effort has been to find out how reasonable and supportive most members of the community are once they are informed and given a chance to be heard.

Marketing and admissions planning is never finished these days, and ours will go on. Next, we plan to:

- implement the plans we have already developed;
- use consultants to test ideas and develop additional strategies;
- continue the educational process about admissions on campus; and
- evaluate our efforts and set new goals, all of which will require further planning.

One thing is clear: Since we formed the task force at F&M, a wider segment of the campus community understands the need for total institutional concern about admissions. That makes our future work easier. CASE

The Case of the Vanishing Students

On the trail of unenrooled applicants and students in good standing who've never graduated

by Daniel Alvirez and Gilberto de los Santos

Every recruitment officer has encountered the mystery of the vanishing students. These missing students usually fall into one of two categories: (1) They filled out an application but, after acceptance, never enrolled; or (2) they completed several semesters but, before graduation, disappeared from sight.

To boost enrollment for the spring 1983 semester, Pan American University started a project in the fall of 1982 that put us on the trail of unenrolled applicants and former students. We planned it according to Philip Kotler's well-known strategies for marketing by nonprofit organizations. That is, we used aggressive marketing efforts to increase Pan American's penetration of its target group.

The project's major attraction was that it promised to increase enrollment at low cost. In the end, the promise was fulfilled. We made more than $60,000 on an investment of less than $7,000.

Our market targets consisted of: 2,196 students who had applied for admission for the fall 1982 semester but had not enrolled; and 1,846 who had left the university in good standing with a 2.0 grade point average or above during the fall and spring semesters of 1981 and 1982. We called the first group "delayed enrolled" students and the second group "good standing" students.

Five strategies helped make our project successful.

1. *Planning.* A participatory planning process helped build awareness, commitment, and support for the project throughout the university. An *ad hoc* recruitment task force of 22 members represented the academic schools and departments, the admissions and registrar's office, the finan-

Gilberto de Los Santos is a professor of marketing at Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas. The late Daniel Alvirez was director of instructional media services and university planning officer at Pan American.

cial aid office, the computer center, and other departments that worked on or were interested in recruitment.

Chaired by the dean of instructional services, the task force received, generated, and filtered ideas on recruitment. The President's Council and the Council of Deans reviewed recruitment plans and promoted university-wide commitment. We also publicized recruitment activities through the campus newsletter and student newspaper.

2. *Teamwork.* The staffs of the admissions and registrar's office provided the basic information on students who had left the university in good standing. They listed the names of students by major and their addresses, phone numbers, and classifications. Academic deans sent these students a letter, a questionnaire, a partially completed application for re-admission, and a preaddressed, stamped envelope. The letter asked students to re-apply for admission for the spring semester by completing the application. The questionnaire asked them to indicate why they had left the university or decided not to complete their enrollment plans.

Getting the package out was a group effort. The deans' staffs, the admissions and registrar's office, and the computer center joined forces to print and mail the materials. Meanwhile, the public information staff sent information to prospective students and members of the university community through the news media.

3. *Follow-up.* We encouraged deans and faculty members to contact students a second time. We gave them a second computerized list of majors from their schools who had not responded as well as a list of students who had applied for admission. They also called students to encourage them to complete their enrollment plans. The extent of the follow-up actually depended on how much the academic department needed students, either at the undergraduate or graduate level.

4. *Feedback.* Academic deans, members of the recruitment task force, and other members of the university community received the results of the survey promptly. We kept a running tally of the number of applications this project generated and shared the counts from time to time, both formally and informally.

5. *Commitment.* An important feature of the project was the effectiveness of three key departments—the admissions and registrar's office, the financial aid office, and the Learning Assistance Center, which includes recruitment, orientation, tutoring, counseling, and academic advisement. These staffs were fully committed to our recruitment effort, and all deans, department heads, and faculty knew it. Everyone in contact with prospective students referred them to these departments with full confidence that they'd receive the assistance they needed.

The results were impressive. Of the delayed enrolled students contacted by mail, 262 (11.9 percent) returned survey forms; 254 (11.6 percent) mailed back completed admission applications; and 318 (14.5 percent) actually enrolled for the spring semester 1983. (This total includes some delayed enrolled students whom we had not targeted.)

Of the good standing students contacted by mail, 195 (10.6 percent) returned survey forms; 145 (7.9 percent) returned the newly completed admission applications we required of them; and 178 (9.6 percent) actually enrolled. (Again, some of these students were not part of our target group.)

In all, the university enrolled 496 additional students for the spring 1983 semester because of this recruitment project. In addition, the returned questionnaires helped us discover the two reasons why our students disappear: lack of funds and courses that are offered at inconvenient times.

The costs of this project were minimal. The university invested approximately $5,650 of staff and computer time, which wasn't actually an additional cost. Postage, printing, and materials totaled $1,186. In effect, in terms of these incremental expenses, the cost-per-student-recruited was $2.39.

The project's payoff includes $61,551 in tuition and fees for the spring 1983 semester. Since this semester is part of the base period for formula-driven state appropriations for two years, the 4,119 semester credit hours for which the 496 students enrolled will generate a minimum of $356,788 for each of the following two years.

As we see it, it's an excellent return on a little detective work. CASE

Making Marketing Work

How a coordinated marketing approach improved a college's enrollment, retention, and public image

by Charles R. Fowler

In the early 1970s, just as Evergreen State College graduated its first class, some of the first articles on applying marketing concepts to higher education surfaced in professional journals.

Few people at Evergreen noticed. Not only was the word "marketing" anathema then, but the concept was also academically and administratively unnecessary. The college's interdisciplinary curriculum, seminar-based teaching methods, and narrative evaluation system had all evolved out of the '60s outcry for reform and relevance. Its solidly liberal arts-based program left no room for applied fields such as business administration (or marketing, for that matter). And as students sought alternatives to traditional institutions, enrollment grew steadily, rising from 1,090 in 1971 to 2,530 in 1977.

But then, after peaking in 1977, Evergreen's enrollment fell. The state legislature started to question the college's cost effectiveness. Washington state's postsecondary education agency launched a study of its academic quality and the public's perception of it. Although Evergreen had begun as a bold educational experiment only a

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few years before, its survival was in serious doubt.

But the college has survived and, in important ways, succeeded. In fact, last year the education editor of the *New York Times* selected Evergreen to be the only public institution among 16 "hidden gem" colleges. Marketing, carefully developed and applied, has been an important part of this success.

Adapting marketing concepts to institutional recruiting, retention, and public relations can attract criticism from idealistic academics. But Evergreen is proof that this criticism can be largely overcome. Through its coordinated marketing program, the college has achieved three important goals—enrollment growth, increased student retention, and greater public awareness—without having to sacrifice its founding principles.

We did all this in six basic steps that can be easily adapted to other institutions. To develop a marketing plan like Evergreen's, you should:

1. *Review the institution's position.* To determine a college's "position," or situation, you must first look at its strengths and weaknesses and then supplement your analysis with solid market research. In more specific marketing terms, the questions are:

- What is the general position of the institution in relation to its competition locally, regionally, and nationally?
- How is the institution perceived by its publics, including its own students, alumni, supporters and donors, the community, the body that provides its funds, and even its critics?

To give you an example of what early research uncovered about our position, we found out that many of Evergreen's important target market groups were either misinformed about or unaware of the college's purpose and methods. The state coordinating unit picked this up especially in interviews with in-state high school counselors and students.

In another instance, we learned through a baseline telephone survey that local residents didn't rate Evergreen as a quality institution in comparison to several others nearby.

In our case, the state higher education coordinating unit and the college both analyzed the existing data and our new market research results. These data provided the basis for the first and subsequent Evergreen marketing plans and programs.

2. *Establish administrative leadership.* Placing responsibility and then budgeting the necessary resources is vital. It's impossible to overemphasize the leadership role of the college president and the need for the governing board's support of the marketing effort.

At Evergreen, a new president—a widely respected former state government administrator—led us to a more directed, comprehensive approach to explaining the college, its programs, its people, and its services.

One of the president's first moves was to form an internal study group to review problem areas and find ways to increase enrollment. The group worked for five months to define the problem, gather information, consider alternatives, and make proposals. Its final report contained 65 primary recommendations, most of which were implemented very rapidly under presidential direction.

One of the first study group recommendations was to create a new position, special assistant to the president and enrollment facilitator. This person would coordinate the initial marketing effort. A sociology professor with research background and organizational skills was selected for the job.

Next, the president formed a Public Relations Advisory Group made up of staff, faculty, students, alumni, and community members. This group worked with the enrollment facilitator to enact the study group's major recommendations. Together they helped adapt the college's educational services and hired a public relations firm to aid in the development of the college's first systematic marketing plan.

3. *Adapt educational services.* In marketing language, "adapting educational services" means modifying the educational "product" to meet the needs of the market.

As a result of the study group's work, we made several curricular changes that increased our appeal to the market without compromising Evergreen's academic philosophy. Some of these changes included:

- creating a comprehensive program of part-time and evening courses;
- developing a more comprehensive summer school curriculum;
- starting an interinstitutional teacher certification program; and
- improving the academic counseling system to show how various majors can lead to careers.

4. *Prepare the marketing plan.* Getting the marketing plan in shape requires a clear sense of what you're hoping to achieve. At Evergreen, the enrollment facilitator, working with the director of admissions and a major public relations firm, developed our first marketing plan in 1979. It included a rationale for adopting marketing at Evergreen and a detailed marketing plan in management-by-objectives form.

Although marketing staffing, planning, and implementation are now done in-house, we have continued this approach. Our 1981-82 plan included major new retention, minority recruiting, and outreach program objectives and strategies under the overall goals. Ultimately, the plan contained six major goals, 13 measurable objectives, and 212 specific strategies.

Some of those objectives and strategies helped us overcome the two perception problems our early research uncovered: the public's misinformed view of Evergreen's purpose and methods, and local residents' belief that it provided lower quality education than other area institutions.

To educate the public about the college's purpose and methods, administrators and faculty rewrote Evergreen's main recruiting publication, the college catalog. Among the revisions was a new chart that explained how the college's interdisciplinary programs encompassed such traditional subject areas as anthropology, music, political science, and chemistry.

To remedy the quality perception problem, we planned new local, regional, and national media efforts and community relations programs. Locally, the activities included traditional chamber of commerce information breakfasts, on-campus visitation days for counselors, and an annual commencement weekend fair that draws more than 20,000 parents, friends of the college, and community members.

Our efforts have also inspired major features in the *New York Times, Christian Science Monitor,* and other regional and national newspapers. One result: A baseline survey shows that our publics now think Evergreen's quality has improved in comparison

with other area colleges listed.

5. *Coordinate and carry out the plan.* Once the marketing strategies are in place, good coordination is essential. At Evergreen, our overriding need was for a single, integrated marketing focus, and so we established an Enrollment Coordinating Committee.

The coordinating committee was developed to pull together Evergreen's many separate marketing-related functions and to carry out the overall plan. The committee cut across traditional college functions and provided an integrated approach to marketing. It coordinated three major areas: academics, student and enrollment services, and college and community relations.

As a result, the initial committee was a diverse group including the senior academic dean for curriculum, the director of admissions, and the director of information services and publications. Over time we added still others, including two advancement area directors and the coordinator of minority recruiting. Originally the committee was chaired by the enrollment facilitator and, on an interim basis, the dean of student and enrollment services. When we created the director of college relations position in mid-1980, the new director assumed the coordinating function and the committee chair.

In the first year, the enrollment coordinating committee completed all the major enrollment and public relations goals by accomplishing more than 90 percent of the strategies. Obviously, in this and any other marketing program, group cooperation and participation are critical. There is no room for organizational "turf protection."

6. *Evaluate the marketing program.* Evaluation takes two main forms: ongoing monitoring and annual review.

At Evergreen, we've developed a systematic research program to monitor each phase of the plan and allow us to correct midcourse mistakes when necessary. Nine survey questionnaires provide us with information at each stage of student contact—inquiry, application, enrollment, and graduation.

Today, about 90 percent of Evergreen's institutional research activity deals with such questions as, for example, the cost effectiveness of personalizing direct mail for student recruitment. In that particular case, we wanted to find the most cost-effective package to build our pool of applicants. So we developed seven increasingly personalized variations on a basic recruiting package.

The results showed that a slightly personalized version—one that featured a personal address and greeting but had a printed letter body and color printed signature—received as good or an even better response than a highly personalized and more costly package.

Our annual review is designed to promote widespread cooperation and feedback. Every year we present a comprehensive evaluation of the marketing program to the board of trustees, as well as a full preview of the marketing plan for the next year.

The overall marketing program at Evergreen has produced results. Between 1979 and 1982, enrollment increased 18 percent. Retention increased 3 percent. Based on our survey research results, public perception has also improved.

And the positive results continue. Enrollment applications for fall 1983 ran 13 percent ahead of last year's. Evergreen is the only public college in Washington to show such a dramatic increase.

The role of advancement

Since the beginning, Evergreen developed its marketing program from a basic institutional advancement perspective. The position of director of college relations/enrollment coordinating committee chair was not established as a student services or admissions role. Instead, it's an advancement responsibility. This validates the idea that marketing has its roots in the professional communications area.

At Evergreen, our marketing program is not simply a means to recruit students. The basis of our marketing plan is research on how the college is perceived by its various publics. Because public opinion assessment and management are, or should be, a fundamental part of college public relations, they fit logically within advancement.

Never before has advancement's expanded role been more essential to the survival of our institutions and perhaps even to higher education itself. We need only recognize our opportunity and exercise the necessary leadership to assume our proper place in this vital effort. CASE

The Mixmasters

A smart marketing mix helps a small college dramatically increase student enrollments

by R. Dana Paul and Ken Stark

Every May marks an important milestone at Adrian College. One day during that month, after totaling a column headed "accepted, deposit paid," we turn our attention to retaining our new students and developing inquiries for the class that will enter in the fall that's 16 months away.

We realize that almost certainly we'll lose a few prospective freshmen before September and enroll others. But we also know that, on a certain day in May, the number of advance registration deposits approximates the size of the entering class.

Although Michigan continues to be economically troubled, Adrian has achieved its freshman and other enrollment goals in four of the past five years. Adrian's headcount enrollment has increased 44 percent since 1978 (from 824 to 1,189). Full-time equivalent enrollment has grown even more. (Hastily, we add that, following eight years of enrollment decline from 1971 to 1978, we had a long way to go.)

Marketing resources

The steady increase and our confidence in enrollment projections stem from a research-based, thoughtfully

planned, carefully implemented, highly controlled—and measurably productive—marketing program. We are fortunate in having a commitment of resources equal to the task and the support of Adrian faculty, students, and administrators.

Having five full-time admissions counselors, including one funded by a grant to recruit area Hispanic students, means the recruitment program puts more ambassadors for Adrian on the road than do the other institutional advancement areas combined. An application secretary, a receptionist/office manager, 12 student callers, two word-processing specialists, and the publications director all assist in generating and responding to nearly 18,000 potential student inquiries.

The market communication program generates messages and transmits them throughout and beyond our 100-mile-radius primary market area. The campaign includes more than 200,000 personalized letters, 11,000 phone calls, and 500 high school and college night visits. Supporting it requires about $50,000 in printed materials, excluding stationery.

In the process, we form Adrian's initial relationships with future students and parents. Through tuition, fees, and auxiliary enterprises, new constituents provide about three-quarters of the income eventually received by the college. Marketing for student recruitment contributes enormously to Adrian's total communications effort. In just one year, it includes mailings to more than 50,000 homes and increases by at least 18,000 the number of individuals who are aware of the college. The number of inquiries is, by comparison, about twice the size of the college's entire alumni population.

Equally important, the recruitment messages we create and distribute are part of a communication strategy planned for the whole college. We know that we increase our program's cost effectiveness and credibility if the content and timing of our student recruitment messages reinforce our communication with other constituencies.

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The marketing mix

Marketing mix refers to the four critical P's—product, price, place, and promotion—and how you can juggle them for maximum effect. The P's are the internal variables we (and you) can control in recruitment and other marketing situations. The Admissions Office at Adrian makes limited recommendations concerning product, price, and place. Its major responsibility is in planning and implementing extensive promotional activities.

Here are the major elements of a successful marketing mix and how we approach them at Adrian.

1. *Product*. Product decisions—those relating to the character of the academic and student life programs—top the sensitive issues for private liberal arts colleges. It's important to use research to determine how current and prospective students view your institution's curricular and extracurricular product.

When it comes to what current and prospective students think of Adrian, we have a great deal of research data that was developed in cooperation with a nationally prominent admissions consulting firm. Additionally, we monitor changes in this basic information by conducting surveys of recently enrolled students, accepted students who chose another college, and high school students who visited our campus. We now know that, although regional awareness of Adrian as a whole has improved, getting students to recognize Adrian for any particular program or the overall quality of the curriculum is still a problem.

The Admissions Office compiles questionnaire results in midyear and year-end reports. The Publications/Information Office uses the findings to develop messages for recruitment and other purposes.

Of course, the college's academic blueprint remains the responsibility of faculty and top administration. But the admissions and public relations staffs do influence curriculum and student life decisions to some degree. We make suggestions about the product by serving on or working with curriculum and retention committees and the Academic Assembly. The latter body recommends academic policies and programs to the administration.

2. *Pricing*. At Adrian, the admissions and financial aid staffs work together to recommend pricing strategy. By pricing, we mean the combination of tuition and financial aid policies that results in different net prices for different groups of students.

We attempt to measure demand elasticity—how much demand for an Adrian education decreases as prices go up. Further, we calculate how various financial aid strategies might affect demand. Is it better to increase tuition and let more affluent students pay a higher price, meanwhile offering more generous scholarships to those who can't? Or are we better off keeping tuition as low as possible, even though financial aid stays low too?

We've had some success at projecting enrollment variations as a function of net cost to students (total cost minus total aid). The overall goal of our pricing strategy is to maximize revenue so that the institution can continue to strengthen its academic program. Again, the final decisions rest with top administrators and the trustees.

3. *Place*. Adrian's location is a variable outside the control of our marketing program. We're in southeast Michigan, one of the country's most depressed areas, and the bulk of our students are from metropolitan Detroit, 65 miles away. The projected decline of 30 to 40 percent in the number of high school graduates in the counties from which most Adrian students will matriculate means our primary market will be greatly reduced.

To counteract the decline, we are trying to increase our share of the market in severely affected counties and to direct more of our efforts at populations where we know the fall-off won't be so dramatic. Increasing market share against heavy competition means we must build more quality into academic and extracurricular programs and do a more effective job of promoting increased value. We'll work especially hard in the less urban areas of Michigan as well as with minority and international students. These are examples of markets less severely affected by the national decline in high school graduates.

4. *Promotion*. Promotional activi-

ties remain our most powerful tool. The purpose of student recruitment promotion is to reach sufficient numbers of potential students, to attract just the right pool of inquiries, to produce enough acceptable applications, to provide some selectivity in choosing applicants whose needs the college can meet, and to generate at least the minimum number of registration deposits. The ultimate goal: to postpone or even cancel anxiety attacks in May.

Building awareness

To accomplish these goals, we realize that we must start by building awareness on the part of thousands of students. After all, before an individual can get interested, build enthusiasm for, or enroll in a college, he or she must be aware of it.

We have found personalized direct mail to be a cost-effective way to build awareness of what we call "The Adrian Approach—A Personal Approach to a Better Life and Career."

Other productive sources of inquiries for Adrian include posters and referrals from pastors, alumni, faculty, coaches, and students. We compile yield rates for each source periodically. We also compute conversion percentages from inquiry to application, application to acceptance, acceptance to deposit, and deposit to enrolled student. This provides bountiful information for planning. We are able to figure the cost effectiveness of various inquiry generators and the critical number of inquiries required to meet our enrollment goals.

Building awareness is important; it's a job that is both measurable and controllable. You will find that the process is much the same in most areas of institutional advancement. The concept holds for potential donors, for example, as well as potential students. The process of identifying sources of donors and determining yields is time-consuming but relatively straightforward. The first step is to code your reply cards, analyze responses, and incorporate your findings in your communications planning. (Of course, you wouldn't handle major donors or prospects this way.)

Measuring progress

We've found that comparing yield data with the timing of specific events in the communication flow system provides additional measures of productivity and cost effectiveness. By watching yield data, we can usually isolate problems with specific letters or publications. We can also measure the effect of faculty and admissions counselor presentations to prospective students who visit campus. We monitor weekly progress reports and compare results with historical information. This activity serves as a barometer of the success of our communications.

Productivity tips

Here are a few more tips on how to make your recruiting efforts more productive:

1. If converting inquiries to applications is a problem, check the relationships of price and programs/services to student needs. Use surveys to determine if your institution is out of step with what prospective students want.
2. If too many applicants are not meeting admissions standards, examine the message content of printed materials and counselor presentations. Then correct any unclear or inaccurate statements.
3. If your deposits are down, it may indicate weak student commitment. Check any changes since last year in price, financial aid strategy, or your communication of institutional benefits. On the latter point, maybe you aren't stressing your school, college, or university's distinctive attributes as they relate to the student market.
4. To assure that those who make deposits show up in the fall, keep communicating with them. This can help eliminate the second thoughts students sometimes have about their decision.

While we've emphasized promotion, all the elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—contribute to a productive student recruitment program. As institutional advancement professionals, we realize we share responsibility for these activities and often have only limited say over product, price, and place. Even so, we shouldn't hesitate to make suggestions on all matters that will make our institution's student recruitment program more productive.

A Flower Child Grows Up

Responding to changing times at UC Santa Cruz
by Richard W. Moll

It was the institutional flower child of the late '60s and early '70s. As a result, it soared in fame and selectivity the moment the doors opened in 1965. The University of California, Santa Cruz was the darling of that unique epoch in American higher education when no tradition was sacred, no educational form valid unless it "felt good" and clearly possessed redemptive social value.

But Santa Cruz was far more than trendy. Beneath the fads of the moment—"narratives" instead of grades, do-it-yourself majors, and the like—was the high quality required of any division of the well-regarded University of California system. Behind its timely facade, Santa Cruz was substantial and demanding.

UCSC was nurtured as a '60s reaction to the multicampus UC system. More graciously said, it provided the system with "balance." Berkeley, UCLA, and the other older siblings had tilted heavily toward graduate and professional training. At least one campus needed to concentrate almost exclusively on the undergraduate, on the first degree. UCSC was the chosen one.

Trouble in paradise

The Santa Cruz project began as a twinkle in the eye of Clark Kerr, then president of the UC system. There was lavish preparation to flesh out the "ideal" undergraduate vision. The state

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procured 2,000 acres in central California, dotted with redwood groves and rolling pastureland and overlooking the breathtaking panorama of Monterey Bay.

The icing on the cake was the establishment of a residential college system known only to Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Yale. Avant garde architects designed each college to outdo the last. (As the mother of a prospective student once said: "This looks like a national park with eight World's Fair pavilions!") The campus was planned to be an undergraduate utopia—in program, in tone, and even in appearance.

But the majesty of that "new era" of alternative education was short-lived. At about the turn of the 1973-74 school year, America suddenly shied from such noble experiments. Almost overnight, Santa Cruz, along with a handful of other '60s stylists, was forced into a defensive posture. A series of ghastly murders of undergraduate women (by one deranged off-campus visitor) seemed the final blow. *Time* magazine called Santa Cruz the "murder capital of America" just as America itself turned its back on the campus's educational style and tone.

UCSC was ushered from the winner's circle almost as quickly as it had stepped in. But its pride would not be compromised. It remembered the fame, the super-selectivity of the student body and faculty. The mid- to late '70s, however, brought lonely times and a dramatic drop in freshman and transfer applications.

Buoyed by self-confidence born of its initial successes and commitment to its original goals, Santa Cruz decided to wait it out. Surely the public—fickle regarding educational styles—would return soon enough to a renewed appreciation of the substantial innovations of the maverick-but-inspired '60s. More important, the Santa Cruz faculty and student body *believed* in themselves. Indeed, both inside and outside the institution, UCSC developed something of a cultist following. To "respond to the times" as conservatism swept America would have been heresy.

But the students weren't coming. And UCSC was, after all, a public institution. To what degree did it *have* to respond to changing public priorities? Its loyal young alumni and the on-campus "traditionalists" did not really have time to debate the question. A dour, scholarly, no-nonsense chancellor arrived from Cal Tech in 1978 and risked near-mutiny by reorganizing the residential colleges so they overlapped less with academic departments. He then turned his attention to admissions.

Realizing the ideal

Santa Cruz launched self-study after self-study. Students, parents, and counselors throughout California filled out questionnaires to guide Santa Cruz in altering a gone-wrong image. The findings were consistent: Although famous for having America's most beautiful location and campus, UCSC had also become well-known for "no grades," questionable academic rigor, and a laid-back, Californian, "sensitivity" approach to undergraduate education.

In response, the campus conducted a national search for UCSC's first dean of admissions to launch a vigorous image overhaul. I, then dean of admissions at Vassar College, was the lucky pick and packed to move west.

Before hitching up my U-Haul, I talked a night away with two promotional gurus of nonprofit institutions, Jan Krukowski and Rick Hessel, who had designed the effective Vassar recruitment publications. We struggled to invent the slogan that would be worthy of the Santa Cruz campaign. Because the Clark Kerr dream of the perfect undergraduate center did indeed have the potential to be realized at UCSC, the word "ideal" became the centerpiece. To involve a new generation of students in the goal, we finally risked "An Ideal Becoming Real."

As I drove cross-country, the Krukowski-Hessel team, with notebooks and cameras in hand, wasted no time boarding a Super-Saver to California. Their $60,000, two-year contract produced lively, artful, but serious four-color publications. The anecdotal new student search piece and poster were designed to *entice* prospective students to the viewbook. Without telling UCSC's complete story, the viewbook was expected to *entice* them to the catalog. The "Ideal Becoming Real" theme coordinated all. It was a handsome, compelling series.

The chancellor pumped considerable portions of his Chancellor's Discretionary Fund into admissions, giving me considerable freedom to apportion it. UCSC rehabilitated a charming historic building at the campus entrance to house the recruiting arm of the admissions office. And we bought a bus to whisk visitors on extensive campus tours.

Then, before launching an aggressive series of visits to high schools, we hired several new recruiters—labeled "straight" by suspicious UCSC insiders—and began intensive training.

The training (repeated each year now) consisted of a two-day, off-campus retreat to decide on the essence of the "new" Santa Cruz message. The message had to be true to the place, of course, but it also had to emphasize the rigor, the quite successful graduate school placement, and the actual role of "experimentation."

We struggled to reduce the story to six key words and an on-the-road "spiel" of not more than 12 minutes. Our goal was to create an outline that would be common to all recruiters but loose enough to allow each the idiosyncrasies of personal presentation. The six "required" words and core of the message were:

1. *Undergraduate.* Santa Cruz was born to serve the student seeking his or her first degree. We're the only University of California campus mandated to keep the number of graduate students below 10 percent. *Every* professor at Santa Cruz takes pride in concentrating on the education of undergraduate students.

2. *Hybrid.* Although Santa Cruz "feels" like a private college—with moderate size (6,500 students), small classes, on-campus housing for over half the students—it also benefits from being part of a renowned, multicampus, public university sharing bountiful physical, human, and financial resources.

3. *Atmosphere.* We're not just alluding to 2,000 acres hanging over Monterey Bay with panoramic views. The essence of our atmosphere is the residential college system that creates a warm, personal, and challenging living and learning environment.

4. *Traditional.* Our students, as at most liberal arts colleges, have two open years of general, liberal arts and sciences education with minimum distributional and area requirements. This is followed by two years of concentrated study in a major, although

students continue to sample subjects relevant to their interests and capabilities, and to fulfill the requirements for future jobs and graduate school. Among the most popular majors are biology, psychology, politics, English, and computer science. True, students can design their own majors, although only 4 percent do. Multidisciplinary majors are popular.

One important feature of Santa Cruz, however, is *non*traditional: the grading system. We have a "Narrative Evaluation System." At the conclusion of every term, each professor gives each student a paragraph describing the strengths and weaknesses of his or her performance in the course. We *believe* in narratives because they say more than grades. But, due to the apprehension students and their parents feel today about getting into graduate school (although UCSC's record is superb), we now offer optional letter grades as a supplement to the narrative, not as a substitute.

(I must pause here to say that on arrival three years ago, I drew considerable fire from faculty and students alike by proposing a revival of the optional grade issue, a concept that had lost in a faculty vote two years before. I contended that grades were imperative to changing the Santa Cruz image, and, in turn, enrollment health. After a solid year of debate, during which my office area was seized and occupied by student zealots, grades "won" by a tiny, three-vote margin. We now have optional grades. Prospective students and parents seem relieved.)

5. *Rigorous.* When a school has small classes, students are visible and must be prepared. So it is at Santa Cruz. More important, Santa Cruz is the only public university in America where a senior *must* complete a major thesis, honors project, or comprehensive exam to graduate.

6. *Selective.* All campuses of the University of California adhere to the same admissions formula—the same requirements regarding course prerequisites, CEEB scores, and GPA. By the California "Master Plan," if a resident student ranks in the top eighth of his or her high school class, admission is a strong probability. For out-of-state students, the standards are somewhat more rigorous.

Other recruitment strategies

Santa Cruz now has a host of new recruiting activities. For example:

- We've formed a large national alumni/parents group to augment the admissions staff at receptions for interested students, to call or visit those who have applied, and to arrange for campus trips.
- We sponsor "Preview Days" on the campus every fall and occasionally in the spring. These attract at least 600 candidates and parents.
- College Board's Student Search provides thousands of prospective student names for mailings and produces surprisingly good returns.
- We host rather lavish on-campus conferences and workshops for secondary school and community college counselors.
- I lecture widely to general audiences on selective college admissions and publish in newspapers and magazines regularly.
- And, most fortunately, the chancellor keeps coming up with the money.

And, thank God, applications have jumped considerably. Between 1980 and 1982, we had an 84 percent increase in Santa Cruz's direct on-time applications.

Of course, utopia is not yet in place in the "ideal" academic village. We at UCSC are forced to be far too defensive about the liberal arts today, as the great majority of the student population clamors for practical, career-directed courses. (Programs for engineering and business at UCSC are almost in place.)

We are, of course, concerned about the declining number of high school graduates and have succeeded in attracting a sizable adult re-entry population. We're not in a population center, and we know hard economic times keep students near home.

All that said, nearly two long decades later, the "ideal" remains true to much of its original vision: It combines the social conscience of the '60s with the evolving practicality and "traditional" rigor of the '80s.

When the "real" will finally settle in we do not know. But the dean of admissions is a cultist now, too. Along with the others, I await full reacceptance of this very special place, a university that is *more* than a time capsule. There is not only commitment but also optimism in our vigorous campaign. **cnse**

Tailor Your Recruiting Tools

by Stephanie Moore

No one has all the answers on how to develop an effective student recruitment plan. But you'll make more headway if you tailor your approach to the various stages of a prospect's interest—from first inquiry to the day when he or she enrolls at your college.

As you know, recruitment usually goes this way: A prospective student first sees some recruitment literature and requests more information from the college. The college responds. The student then applies, is accepted, and eventually enrolls. Each point is a step in the process.

An institution's needs should determine how much emphasis to place on each step. For example, if a college wants to increase its enrollment, it may need to upgrade its first-contact piece. This will generate more prospects.

Another college may have an adequate number of prospects, but may want to upgrade the quality of matriculating students. That college will want to emphasize the steps closer to actual admission.

Once a college has decided where to place its emphasis, it must determine what is needed at each stage in the way of literature, phone calls, campus visits, and so forth. The college should lead the candidate from one step of the recruitment process to another.

What are specific recruitment techniques that will:

- increase inquiries?
- increase the number of applicants

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and strengthen their commitment?

• increase the number of enrollments?

Here are some ideas.

Increase inquiries

• *Develop an appealing first-contact piece.* Of course, this first piece, like all of your recruitment tools, should reflect the distinctiveness of your college.

• *Send out a secondary school poster.* An attractive poster for bulletin boards in secondary schools may increase inquiries. Be sure to attach cards that prospects can return to your admissions office.

• *Use magazine advertisements.* Advertise on a national or regional basis in such publications as *Time, Sports Illustrated, Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. Include a coupon to be filled out by the prospects and mailed to your admissions office.

• *Emphasize certain constituencies.* For example, the Methodist Church founded the University of Denver. Although our connection with the church has been minimized, we feel there is still an advantage in appealing to young Methodists who might want to come to DU. Also, we are located in an area with a strong Spanish-American tradition, and we may try to increase our appeal to Spanish-speaking people.

• *Build a traveling exhibit*. An exhibit built into a van makes it possible to take professors and materials from various departments right to the prospective students. Both Purdue anc Drexel have used this technique with much success. Although exhibits are costly, you may decide to invest in one.

• *Plan a special PR activity*. Special meetings can deal with a range of topics. They might include the changing nature of today's college student, your faculty's quality, special financial aid programs, or research on your campus. A few years ago, DU launched a three-day blitz campaign in Grand Junction, Colorado. The blitz included meetings with faculty members, a speech by the chancellor, appearances by a music group—all with newspaper, radio, and TV coverage. As a result, that year we doubled the number of matriculating students from the target area.

Strengthen commitment

Once you have an inquiry, you need to lead the candidate to the point of submitting an application. In other words, you need to strengthen his or her interest in your college.

• *Develop an attractive first-response piece.* When a person first inquires about your school, he or she moves from being a prospect to being a candidate. You need an attractive first-response piece. You can send this before the candidate receives the college catalog. In fact, if you really want to increase admissions, consider diverting some of the funds currently spent on your catalog to a first-response piece. It may be a better way to spend the money.

Your first-response brochure—often called a prospectus or general information brochure—can cover such topics as faculty quality, the freshman year, programs and majors offered, and campus attractions. Be sure to include an application. This brochure should contain ample information so that students can make an informed decision about your college.

• *Publish special brochures.* If you have an outstanding faculty, you may want to emphasize this in a special brochure. Or consider using one to show the typical life of a student at your college. With good photographs and lively copy, it can describe dormitory life, counseling, career development opportunities, and the fraternity system—not to mention the flavors of ice cream the cafeteria serves. Don't neglect your athletic programs. At DU, we decided to emphasize this area when we found that 80 percent of our students become involved in intramural sports.

• *Put together audio-visual presentations.* A strong audio-visual presentation can build on the assets described in your literature. You can show it to interested candidates and alumni recruiters, as well as on local TV programs.

• *Develop a transfer prospectus.* This brochure should focus on program compatibility and on career and graduate school possibilities, if available at your campus. Building on materials you already have, it should also promote your college's standard attractions.

Increase enrolled students

Once a qualified candidate has applied and been accepted, make sure he or she actually matriculates. Here are helpful procedures and materials at this stage of recruitment:

• *Develop program planning guides.* These publications appeal to candidates interested in a particular area such as business administration, natural sciences, journalism, and so forth. The guides can describe requirements, career possibilities, and so on.

• *Establish a center for prospective students.* This facility for prospective student visitors should make use of available recruitment literature and audio-visual programs. Student or alumni volunteers can run the center. You might also offer pre- or post-application admission counseling.

• *Encourage department chairpersons to contact prospective students.* A potential applicant will be impressed by a letter from the head of the academic area that interests him or her.

• *Set up a third-party admissions program.* This can include selected alumni, current students, faculty, and parents. These people attend meetings and social events, provide counseling, and make phone calls to prospective students. If they are well prepared, they can be very effective in follow-up, and can personalize the recruitment program. A full-time employee should administer this program. *(For details of how one such program works, see the article by Merilyn Bonney, page 64. —ED.)*

• *Plan special events.* These activities bring prospective students to campus for intellectual, social, and cultural happenings. For example, consider involving them in foreign language programs or in workshops on such topics as creative writing, debate, art, music, and photography.

As you develop your recruitment program, remember to coordinate recruitment PR with your institution's overall PR approach. For instance, pay close attention to the impact other media relations and special events efforts might have on recruitment.

In the past, many of us have made the mistake of considering students either prospects or those actually enrolled. Actually, there are more steps in the recruitment process.

It will help if you think of students in stages from prospect to candidate, to applicant, to matriculated student. For best results, then, we need to develop material and programs to match these various stages of student interest.

Behave Like a Business!

To the organized go the students (and the dollars)
by David W. Barton, Jr.

The ultimate determinant of our fate will be society's decision as to whether the services we are rendering are worth the costs our continued existence entails.

Are we simply at the mercy of runaway economic and cultural forces that doom an optimistic view of our futures? Or can we plan in such a way as to force our fortunes to be decidedly different from others with less foresight?

Wouldn't our program construction and population mix be considerably less difficult to orchestrate if we saw ourselves more as a regional with national significance than a national with regional significance?

Peter Drucker speaking on the management revolution? *Fortune Magazine* analyzing corporate concerns? Excerpts from a marketing text at Harvard Business School? Wrong on all three counts. These quotations come from three leading educators—all committed to the idea that American higher learning needs to behave more like a business enterprise than ever before in its history. (Those quoted, in order, are: Henry King Stanford, president, University of Miami; John Maguire, dean of admissions, Boston College; and John Blackburn, vice chancellor for university resources, University of Denver.)

To understand this recent phenomenon, we need a new glossary, or at least some agreed-to definitions. Many buzz words (formerly heard only in board rooms and corporate offices) are now part of general higher education vocabulary and result in some misunderstanding. Let's consider some of these terms:

Marketing: Philip Kotler nails this one down. "Marketing is a human activity undertaken to satisfy some set of needs through exchange processes." In other words, marketing is the process of getting buyer and seller together to find areas of mutual benefit.

Positioning: Defining an institution's mission, including specific educational objectives and philosophy, in order to reveal clearly the differences between it and that of other institutions.

Marketing strategy: The overall plan for matching program offerings to student interests.

Marketing techniques: The tactics an institution develops to send and receive messages to and from its various constituencies.

Experience shows that many institutions—when they are aware of these major concerns—tend to tackle them piecemeal. Usually they concentrate on the area where the need is most apparent and the loss of revenue most acute. In the case of private institutions (and usually public institutions as well, with their dependencies on full-time equivalent students as a base for appropriations), this concern most often centers on student recruitment and retention.

Yet it should be clear by now that it is not possible or practical to divide institutional marketing into categories, such as student recruitment, development, or community relations.

Almost every time an institution goes to the public to recruit students, it is touching some other market—parents, for example, or high school counselors or alumni. Capital campaigns bring visibility that can work for, or sometimes against, success in the student marketplace. Annual giving, day-to-day media relations, internal information programs— all of these activities impinge on several constituencies at once. Careful preplanning of every outreach effort is vitally important to achieve maximum impact and return on your investment.

We can see, through the examples of two institutions, the need to deal with communication management problems as a whole. One was caught in a crisis that might have been avoided by a more effective communications strategy. The other is wisely trying to create improved public perception rather than be forced to react to unmanageable pressures.

We find the example of communication crisis at a highly regarded, single-sex liberal arts college during a heated internal debate over its single-sex commitment. The battle was covered in local, regional, and national media. During its course, annual giving declined, applications fell off, and the college's image suffered. Once the institution resolved the problem, all these indices began to right themselves.

In the other case, an independent, urban university developed and is implementing a marketing strategy aimed at supporting the overall development of the institution, not of any one activity.

This approach required adopting some basic communications policies and establishing a communications strategy. The strategy called for the institution to:

- Make public a definitive presentation of its institutional mission—its reason for being, its academic emphasis, and its capacity for stimulating growth in its students.
- Adopt a theme that not only works for student recruitment but also states the basic case for financial support.
- Create a new public events policy to measure events by three specific criteria: (1) Does the event attractively convey the academic programs? (2) Does it interest prospective students and their advisers? (3) Will it attract donors and prospective donors?
- Maintain a broad-based public service program with the institutional theme, which defines the institution's past (its historic relationship with its region) and its potential.
- Begin an on-campus forum to prepare studies, policies, and public documents relating to important regional, national, and international topics.
- More clearly state the impact and relationships of the institution's economic, cultural, athletic, research, and other service functions to its central

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academic function.

• Develop a consistent, easily explained, and widely broadcast concept of the institution's primary appeal for freshmen and transfer students.

• Recognize the trend toward regionalism when assessing the potential student pool.

Sound organizational concepts, strong management discipline, and unswerving follow-through are part of an institution's behaving like an enterprise. The rewards of this approach are evident: To the organized go the students and the dollars—strong incentives, indeed, to get organized.

Five ways to get organized

1. Put marketing in its proper perspective. Plan program offerings to match public interest in programs.

2. Ask the tough questions of purpose, audience, message, style, and tone.

3. Establish communications policies and create a wholesale marketing strategy. Be sure this is understood internally.

4. Budget by need—not by history. Know what it costs to do business.

5: Use professionally trained help. Too much is at stake for the untried, unsupported notions of the inexperienced. ens

Why We Need Marketing

An interview with Philip Kotler
by Nancy Harper

(The American Marketing Association surveyed 440 professorial subscribers to its Journal of Marketing. *The survey asked educators to list outstanding leaders in marketing thought.*

Philip Kotler's name appeared in the resulting list more often than any other. He is the Harold T. Martin Professor of Marketing in Northwestern University's J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Kotler's research and writing center on market analysis, new product development, and marketing strategy, planning, and control. One of his three books is the most widely used marketing text in graduate business schools. His book, Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations, *provides one of the few published sources of help for noncommercial marketing efforts.*

To lead off a special issue on marketing in higher education [May 1977], Nancy Harper, [former CURRENTS *assistant editor] interviewed Kotler in Evanston, Illinois.*—ED.)

CURRENTS: *Suppose that I am the president of a liberal arts college in the rural Midwest. We enroll 2,000 students. For the third year in a row, enrollment is up slightly and I feel complacent. Would I need marketing?*

Kotler: Low enrollment is not the only reason for needing marketing. A college with adequate enrollment ought to be concerned with the reasons *why* it is getting students, why it is successful, and whether the reasons for its success will continue. For example, the college may have done nothing to help its situation. Maybe the mood of high school students has shifted toward smaller colleges, and this college is riding well as a result.

I am concerned that the situation could reverse itself. Quite suddenly, the president could find out that not enough work had been done to develop a long-term market for the college. He or she should try to learn now what the college's position is in the marketplace and where its present students are coming from. Otherwise, the future could throw a curve at the college.

CURRENTS: *A curve such as the fact that fewer high school students today means fewer college students five years from now?*

Kotler: That's right. The president ought to find out if the school is satisfying the customer. Many college students may have left with indifferent or negative feelings toward the college. They may be "talking down" the college to their friends and acquaintances. Unfavorable comments will materialize as a threat years later. Even though the college seems like a successful operation, the president should use market research to see that the students are satisfied.

CURRENTS: *Before we get too far, we ought to define marketing.*

Kotler: May I give you this definition? Marketing is the analysis, planning, and control of programs designed to bring about desired exchanges with designated markets.

Let me explain that. Every organization is surrounded by publics. When we talk about a college, we're thinking of many such publics, one of which is prospective students. The college wants to attract some of these students, but it cannot force the attraction and it doesn't want to beg for students.

How do you get a resource that you want very much from someone else? You can steal it, you can force it, or you can beg for it. Or, you can offer something attractive to the other party—an offer package. It's a set of benefits; it's an affiliation; it's something that's so motivating that, although that person has many other choices, he or she freely decides to transact with you.

So, exchange is a very democratic idea. Since the two parties voluntarily entered the relationship, they will be satisfied if their expectations are met. Marketing concerns the *management* of that exchange from the seller's point of view.

CURRENTS: *What are the basic steps in marketing?*

Kotler: Very basically, a marketing effort involves planning to set marketing goals, identifying the publics or groups to whom we will appeal, doing research to learn their needs and preferences, developing a product, distribution planning, pricing, and promotion.

CURRENTS: *Are these aspects of marketing what you call a marketing mix?*

Nancy Harper, formerly assistant editor of CURRENTS, *now owns a marketing company, Harper and Hiebert Strategic Marketing, in Lawrence, Kansas, and is on the faculty of the School of Journalism at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.*

Kotler: The marketing mix is a set of consumer-satisfying tools—everything that you would organize to serve and satisfy customers.

Let's think for a moment about the steps and what they mean. It's marketing research when we try to find out methodically what high school students are seeking and what they think and know about different colleges. Product/service development in college marketing means designing attractive curricula that help build enrollments.

Distribution planning is thinking through where classes shall be located and at what time they should be offered. Do we have evening classes and day classes? Do we reach out by offering classes in a nearby city, over educational television, or even on a commuter train?

Pricing—tuition and financial aid—is an integral part of college administration. And promotion enters into the picture with college catalogs, advertisements in magazines and on radio stations, and public relations programs.

We need to ask ourselves how well we are doing each of these jobs. And, could we do them better?

CURRENTS: *Do you think that colleges and universities use marketing now without realizing it?*

Kotler: Yes, we all do marketing. It's not a question of deciding to do it or not to do it, but, rather, of deciding how to do it and how to be effective.

CURRENTS: *Could you tell us the types of marketing, so that we might understand and refine our methods?*

Kotler: We talk about three different marketing approaches. One is called a product-oriented approach to marketing. With this, you might say, "We will design a good college. We know what makes a college good. People will recognize its inherent merit. We will not have to promote it. After all, a good product sells itself."

CURRENTS: *Is this a valid approach?*

Kotler: This product-oriented thinking will work for some of our most outstanding institutions. If you have a Cadillac, it's going to draw a lot of buyers because of its well-known quality. But even Cadillacs may lose their market if they are not sensitive to changing customer needs.

CURRENTS: *Then what are the other approaches to marketing?*

Kotler: Another kind of marketing is what we call the hard-sell approach. The organization becomes highly sales-oriented. Even teachers and staff members are enlisted to go out and sell the college—to be boosters and enthusiasts. Success is not left to chance. It's a real drive of the kind we might see in some evangelical movements. We have seen troubled colleges try to energize their supporters in this manner.

There's a third kind of marketing that focuses on building satisfaction in a long-term clientele. It's professional marketing. It entails quite consciously doing a good job of consumer and market research, market definition and cultivation, product and service design and development, distribution, planning, pricing, and promotion.

CURRENTS: *Why should CASE members be interested in professional marketing?*

Kotler: Because it takes work and thought to develop the active interest and support of various publics connected with the college. The development officer must understand why people give money to any specific institution and how to appeal to people. Raising money is a marketing problem.

The alumni director is trying to strengthen good feelings toward the college among its alumni. Many alumni don't get involved with the college, financially or with time. So there's a problem that calls for a marketing plan.

Inaccurate publications can hurt the marketing effort, and so can ineffective contacts with the legislature. So, without a harmonized effort by the institution, the school may fail to attain its goals.

CURRENTS: *We are all committed to advancing our institutions. Perhaps, however, that commitment is not backed by a plan. What benefits do you see from a concerted, organized marketing effort?*

Kotler: Four major benefits are likely to accrue. They are: a better balancing of conflicting interests, a better monitoring of important changes in the environment, a more relevant product, and greater communication effectiveness.

CURRENTS: *What dangers can institutions avoid by using marketing?*

Kotler: They can avoid being *unresponsive*. Some organizations do nothing to measure the needs, perceptions, preferences, or satisfaction of their constituent publics. Furthermore, they make it difficult for publics to feed back complaints, suggestions, and opinions.

Until recently, many universities drew more students than they could handle, and therefore were less responsive to student attitudes. We saw proof of this in the inability of many colleges to deal with the student upheavals in the late '60s and early '70s.

Customers of unresponsive organizations become frustrated and dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction leads to rebellion or apathy. Ultimately, the organization seals its own doom.

CURRENTS: *The benefits of a concerted marketing effort are obvious, but carrying it out is not easy. In your book,* Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations, *you quote Edward S. McKay, a marketing consultant:*

> It may require drastic and upsetting changes in organization. It usually demands new approaches to planning. It may set in motion a series of appraisals that will disclose surprising weaknesses in performance; distressing needs for modification of operating practices; and unexpected gaps, conflicts, or obsolescence in basic policies. Without doubt, it will call for reorientation of business philosophy and for the reversal of some long-established attitudes. These changes will not be easy to implement. Objectives, obstacles, resistance, and deep-rooted habits will have to be overcome. Frequently, even difficult and painful restaffing programs are necessary before any real progress can be made in implementing the concept.

McKay paints a black picture of the management hassles involved in marketing. How do you respond?

Kotler: Certainly, marketing can disturb existing understandings and power relationships within a college. I would suggest that a college president be careful about the way in which he or she brings in marketing resources, not because others have something to fear—I think it will enhance their work—but because they *think* they have something to fear. Marketing would be counterproductive if it divided and antagonized people.

CURRENTS: *Have you any suggestions to help administrators sell the idea of marketing within their institution?*

Kotler: There are four or five different ways to draw marketing thinking into an organization.

The first way is to hire a marketing consultant, advertising agency, or marketing research firm to look at a specific problem on a short-term basis. This method means you can learn a little bit about marketing without building it into the university as a fixed cost. It's a way to buy expertise.

A second way to do it is to form a marketing committee using the staff you already have. It could include the director of development, the director of public relations, the director of alumni, and some of the deans. In addition, you might add a trustee who has experience in business. Make this committee responsible for developing the long-range marketing plan.

A third way is to add a permanent marketing specialist to the staff—someone who's very good at marketing research or communications, depending upon your needs. If your problem is a lack of understanding of student trends and attitudes, you add an expert on marketing research. Or, if your problem is communication, you hire an expert in advertising and/or PR.

The fourth way is more radical and takes more courage: Hire a marketing director. That person would be responsible for overseeing and coordinating a number of services, including market research, marketing planning, communication, and pricing. I know that this is not an attractive solution to small colleges because it means creating another job position.

There is a fifth approach—designating a vice president of marketing. Very often, a college's vice president of development functions this way without using the term "marketing" in the title.

CURRENTS: *The term is a problem. To many, marketing means hard selling and manipulation.*

Kotler: This image of marketing comes from its most visible expression—the selling of consumer packaged goods. Every time we watch television or read magazines, we see the commercials and think that marketing is always hard sell. Actually, marketing started out as a contrast to the idea of pure selling.

In the old days, someone would manufacture a product and then ask a sales force to sell it. No matter how good or how bad the product was, the sales force was rated on how many customers it found.

Then the idea arose that we should make a product that doesn't require hard selling because it sells itself. If we figure out what people really want, then there'll be a natural market for the product and selling would be easy. In fact, the sales staff would be taking orders rather than selling.

So, marketing and sales are opposites in some ways. A good job of marketing can make hard selling redundant. Marketing calls upon the provider to do a good job of studying the buyer's needs, perceptions, motivations, and preferences.

CURRENTS: *You say that marketing should not be equated with selling and manipulation but with research and response—with identifying and responding to needs.*

Kotler: Right. After all, it's difficult to change or manipulate people—to convince them to want something that they don't want at the moment or to give up something they now want for what you offer. And not only is it difficult, it's expensive and, I think, unethical.

On the other hand, a response philosophy is easy and natural. Instead of setting out to change people's desires, you respond to the desires they already have. That's what modern marketing is about.

If the term—marketing—is a handicap in college circles, we don't have to use it. The point can be made in other ways.

CURRENTS: *Should a college simply give students what they want? This seems to be what marketing is saying. Do students know what they want? And more importantly, do they know what they need?*

Kotler: No, perhaps they don't know exactly what they want. But, on the other hand, I don't accept the opposite argument that students' tastes, preferences, opinions, and desires ought to be disregarded in setting up a college program and particular curricula and courses. Too often, colleges try to tell students that they need liberal arts, or a foreign language, or a course in philosophy without explaining this in a language students can understand. Students today don't like to be told what to take—they like to know why they should take the course, what its benefits are, what they are giving up in its stead. The argument that they will understand 10 years later that the school knew best is a cop-out. Surely, there should be some responsibility to explain to the consumer the value of these courses. And in the case of certain traditional courses, the value really isn't there any longer, at least not for all students. Those teaching the "dead" courses want to require them—it ensures their jobs. In my mind, it is their responsibility to sell them to students, to teach them vigorously and effectively, and not to hide behind required courses.

I visualize a college as a floating armada of intellectual resources that must be kept current and be described in terms that are meaningful and motivating to students. And I don't mean fancy packaging without substance. I mean solid courses, well described, that deliver important values that are recognized by the consumers.

CURRENTS: *How does a college get started in planning its marketing? What is the first step?*

Kotler: The first step takes place in the top echelon of college management: the president's office and the board of trustees. Marketing does not start in the admissions office. The admissions effort—as important as it is—is largely a sales effort. Its effectiveness depends on how well the top management has defined the college's mission to begin with. What does it want to be as an institution? What groups does it want to serve? What weight does it want to put on sheer intellectual development versus social and emotional development? The answers to these questions will determine the college's positioning among similar institutions.

CURRENTS: *These are questions of great importance. What input does the college administration need to reflect on these questions?*

Kotler: The college should start by trying to find out how it is currently perceived in the marketplace.

First, it asks, how much awareness is there of the college's existence among various groups? If this is a local, rural college, then it's not necessary to find

out if people living 2,000 miles away are aware of its existence. It is desirable to know how many high school students in your target market—those you define as the ones you want to attract—are aware of the institution. Awareness can mean as little as knowing the name.

CURRENTS: *What if you find out that your main target market has low awareness of the college?*

Kotler: Then you must take steps to build greater awareness. Advertising is the most cost-effective way to do this.

The next step is to find out about comprehension. Now we're talking about how much the market knows about the college. There may be high awareness but low comprehension. High school students may know the name but not know that the college has an effective job placement service or that it has a unique science program or that it has small classes.

The next step is to measure attitudes toward the school. Besides share-of-mind, a college wants share-of-heart. One helpful tool is the semantic differential, which asks high school students to rate the institution on polar adjective scales such as progressive/old-fashioned, friendly/unfriendly, high prestige/low prestige, and so on.

All of this gives initial data on the college's position in the market. It helps locate problems and opportunities. It helps set marketing objectives such as building awareness or comprehension of favorable attitudes.

CURRENTS: *We've used prospective students as an example of one public. What other groups should we concern ourselves with?*

Kotler: A college is not dealing with the whole public as an undifferentiated mass, but with specific groups: donors, students, faculty, alumni, mass media, government agencies, employers, and many others. The marketer asks about each of these groups: What do they need and want and what can we offer in exchange to build a long-lasting and satisfying relationship? Each public may require a marketing plan.

CURRENTS: *At this point, we know our institutional goals, we've defined the market, and we have researched how the college is perceived. What's next?*

Kotler: Well, we may not like how we are perceived in the market. Either the image is wrong, in which case we need to do a better job of communicating; or the image is not flattering, in which case we will have to improve our product.

We ought to imagine alternative futures for our school. We can't be a Model T Ford in a world of rocket ships. We must be ready to consider new possibilities and test them internally as well as externally. A liberal arts college may want to add a business school because it can't attract enough liberal arts students. The question is: Will the faculty accept this? Sometimes internal marketing is a greater challenge than external marketing.

CURRENTS: *It isn't necessary to offer a brand-new program, is it? Could we just as well work with something that is already part of the institution?*

Kotler: Oh yes, we might want to refresh and relaunch an existing product that might not be working well. For example, the political science program may not be drawing. The reasons can be identified and steps can be taken to revitalize this program.

CURRENTS: *What about the college's catalog?*

Kotler: Many college catalogs have a sameness. They show, if they can, the lovely buildings and trees. But the student wants to know what kind of person he or she might become after attending the college, and what sort of life he or she might have there.

CURRENTS: *Let's go back to a hypothetical situation. Imagine two similar colleges in the same area. They have roughly the same programs and both are doing well. Then, one of the two begins an exciting new program—like opening a new student center or starting courses in business management—and it begins to outdraw the other. What should the competitor do?*

Kotler: It has three choices, really. One is to do nothing out of inertia or out of a feeling that students will not abandon it.

The second is to imitate the other college by opening its own new student center or business management program. This offsets the other college's advantage. I consider the second alternative uncreative.

The third alternative is to find new programs or services that will add distinctiveness to the school. This is called *positioning*—finding a viable niche in the market.

Colleges that do not position themselves distinctly in the market are going to attract students who have not thought through what they want from college. It's a hit-and-miss student body.

CURRENTS: *Most institutions simply cannot afford to begin a new program or service. In many cases, administrators must first drop programs to generate the needed cash. How would you determine which programs to kill, to build, or to refresh?*

Kotler: That's a very important question. Organizations are learning that they cannot offer everything. Instead of allowing every department to grow, each department can be tagged for one of four missions.

Some departments will be tagged for *growth* and will receive an increasing share of the resources.

Other departments will be *maintained* in size. They will receive a steady level of support because they face a stable demand. For example, English, physics, and math courses are in this category.

Other departments will be put in a *phase-down* pattern. These are departments (or courses) with shrinking markets.

A fourth group should be *phased out.* These are departments or courses with very few students and highly uncertain futures.

CURRENTS: *So, in the future, we should allocate money according to the category?*

Kotler: That's right. I believe that schools in the future will use this type of strategic resource allocation.

Continuing all programs at the same level is the easy way out because it doesn't arouse internal political struggles. It takes a courageous administrator to get agreement from trustees and deans that certain areas will be built, others maintained, others phased down, and others phased out.

CURRENTS: *Marketing involves price. What if a state college needs more money and wants to raise the tuition?*

Kotler: What you do in that case is to direct your marketing effort at the legislature. You discover as much as you can about the lawmakers. What are their perceptions and attitudes about your institution? What are their

desires for higher education in the state? What do they want the college to accomplish? You can also try to present the tuition hike as an opportunity. It calls for a marketing plan.

CURRENTS: *Once you've convinced the legislature to raise tuition, you have a problem with students. In fact, some are filing lawsuits against institutions that presented a figure but then raised the ante. How would you deal with student dissatisfaction in the event of a tuition hike?*

Kotler: You would try to help students understand that a tuition hike was not a callous act of a despotic administration. The reasons must be communicated effectively. You might invite a student committee to look at the university's finances to see what shape they are in. When the student committee states publicly that they've looked at the books and are convinced that more tuition is the only answer, you've taken the edge off the criticism.

Trust really depends on the institution. Too many administrators think of their students as temporary residents who shouldn't have much interest or influence in its policies. That's the wrong attitude, especially from a marketing view.

In students, you are building a permanent constituency: They are members of your organization, not occasional customers who are here today and gone tomorrow. They are persons who want to feel like worthwhile members of a worthwhile institution.

CURRENTS: *After we've positioned our school in the marketplace, we need to communicate with our publics. Who does this?*

Kotler: Everyone associated with the school is a school communicator. However, I would like to see someone in charge who is especially sensitive to communications. The public relations director might be the best coordinator. Too many schools use their public relations director only for news releases, walking around visitors, and answering inquiries. He or she comes in *after* policies are decided. I would like to see the public relations director sit in on the meetings of the top administration and give input that will be part of policy-making. The best public relations people are becoming increasingly market-oriented and are interested not only in communication but in what is needed and what is being offered.

CURRENTS: *Does marketing thinking reduce the autonomy of the deans and others?*

Kotler: It would be counterproductive to introduce a function that's going to cause factionalism and possibly organizational paralysis. Marketing thinking, if it is introduced correctly, will enhance the performance of the other functions.

CURRENTS: *As you perceive higher education in general, have you any advice for us?*

Kotler: Higher education is on the defensive right now. It must convince young people and their parents that it is a "good," that they should want it, that they will benefit by it, and that they should support it.

The issue, however, is accountability. Some colleges are hurting the rest of the industry by not delivering the real value for the money. The college-seeking public will increasingly favor those institutions that have a track record for offering a meaningful education and customer satisfaction.

Higher education is a business. It has to justify its existence through good deeds and not just through hallowed words. **cnsa**

Strategic Planning in Admissions

A management vs. sales model
by William Iblanfeldt

Who Goes Where to College is the title of a book written by Alexander Astin in the early 1960s. Astin's book focused on the college choice process of National Merit Scholars. Today, the question of who goes where to college and why has changed substantially. The college population is pluralistic, many more students enroll than in the 1960s, and a far greater number of institutions serve their divergent needs.

Astin, as well as others (Astin, 1975; Noel, 1978), has further addressed the question: Who remains and why? However, little effort has been made by individual colleges and universities to relate information identifying who remains and why, to information on who is recruited and why. The purpose of this article is to assist institutions in developing an admissions marketing plan that achieves the objective of recruiting students who are likely to remain once enrolled.

To achieve such congruence, prospective students should have a good understanding of the product the institution has to offer, including opportunities that the college experience will create, financing alternatives, skill development, and the social, psychological, and religious values inherent in the institution's mission. These are the factors that affect demand and that each institution must address if it is to successfully achieve or maintain its enrollment objectives.

"What are the desired outcomes of a specific college experience?" is a question which few, if any, institutions attempt to answer for prospective students. Most colleges and universities offer a value added or developmental experience but lack the empirical data to support their perceptions (Ihlanfeldt and Davis, 1982).

The college that can clearly identify student growth in terms of outcomes should have a decided advantage in

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developing consumer interest. As prospective students become better shoppers, they will force institutions to empirically support their developmental claims. Thus, measuring outcomes through institutional assessment is one way for a college to reposition itself in relation to competing institutions.

Analyzing the problem

Numerous institutions, both public and private, each year graduate fewer than 50 percent of their entering freshmen, and an even larger number of colleges and universities graduate no more than one-third (American Council on Education, 1976). Such schools may be severely threatened by demographic trends in the 1980s if they continue to count on their admissions departments to solve their enrollment and revenue problems. However, if they address the reasons for the retention problem by analyzing their current and prospective markets and by implementing a strategic admissions plan, that threat will be greatly reduced or eliminated.

Not infrequently, one hears or reads that a given college has succeeded in recruiting more freshmen but still has not achieved its enrollment objectives. We tend not to translate such a statement to our own institution unless we are forced to examine such ratios as the number of new students to total enrollment or the distribution of new student enrollments across departments or schools.

Each year colleges across the country close their doors because they have been unable to stop attrition. Shortly before closing, one small four-year college in Missouri found that each year, although its total enrollment was stable, 50 percent of its student body consisted of new enrollments. This situation is similar to that of a two-year women's college that hired me for my first position as an admissions officer. Each year two-thirds of the student body were freshmen. Fifty percent of the previous freshman class failed to reenroll. Yet few members of the campus community appeared to be concerned. Few asked if the environment could be improved or if a different type of student could be recruited, a student who would be more satisfied with the experiences offered by the college and thus more likely to return each year and to graduate. This school, too, eventually closed its doors, partly because it no longer had a marketable mission, and partly because it did not have an institutional strategy to address its overall enrollment objectives other than spending more money on student recruitment.

Neither of these institutions was able to improve its attractiveness by first improving its environment and then by successfully conveying this change to the marketplace. The challenge they both faced was to improve the match between what enrolled students expected and what they experienced. They failed at a time when ample numbers of prospective students were in the marketplace. They failed because their administrators and faculty did not understand or accommodate the needs of their markets.

There is at least one advantage to the current fear of enrollment shortfalls and the increasing budgetary dependency on tuition revenues: The attendant problems related to attrition are now receiving attention from administrators and faculty on our campuses. Such concern often results in an improved product that increases the attractiveness of the institution. New and modified programs, better defined standards of performance, a greater array of support services, and a growing student perception that the faculty and staff do care—all of these factors can help improve the level of student satisfaction and redefine the image of the institution in the marketplace.

I use the word "can" rather than "will" because to influence recruitment, changes in programs and/or the existence of new programs have to be communicated to prospective students within various market segments. The difficulty of doing so is evidenced by the fact that many institutions have improved programming within the past decade, but have been unable to change their relative market position. Admissions officers, as they explain the changes that their institutions have made in X, Y, and Z programs, are often confronted with prospective students whose response is: "So what else is new? Every college representative that I talk with says the same thing."

The challenge then becomes: How can an institution identify, penetrate, and gain the attention of the market segment it can best serve? This objective cannot be achieved by employing the same old techniques used by hundreds of other admissions offices. Once the product has been transformed to better serve students, the institution must be able to package its promotional effort in a way that will differentiate it from other institutions with which it competes.

The usual approach is what I would define as an attempt at a "quick fix," a "shot-gun" effort which involves spending more for flashier promotional brochures, more on merit scholarships, and more on additional personnel for the admissions department. Seldom is the question asked, "Are there other management styles and methods of communication that could transmit the message in a more effective and timely manner?"

The strategic planning objective should be to create a better fit between the institution's total environment and various market segments and to communicate this "fit" to students. The primary need, then, is for an admissions department that views itself as managing a communication process rather than as a sales force to recruit students. Such an approach should result in a higher retention rate and decreasing dependency on new enrollments to balance the institutional budget.

Prospective enrollments and tuition revenues

As institutional budgets become increasingly tuition-dependent, it is common for faculty and staff who do not have the primary responsibility for student recruitment to quantify various enrollment objectives without the benefit of prior market research. The faculty, trustees, and administrative staff are often quick to agree that enrollment must either be stabilized or increased, and to make the related request that quality be improved and racial, ethnic, and class diversity be expanded. It is presumed that these objectives can be attained without any change in the distribution of enrollments across the institution or any real increase in the financial aid budget. Each of these variables—enrollment, quality, diversity, and student aid—is viewed as a discrete entity with little or no interdependency.

In fact, as we ponder the problem of attempting to maintain or increase enrollment, we must consider many interdependent factors: the demographic trends by geographic region, changes in participation rates of various age groups, the present market position of not only the institution as a whole but of the programs within the institution, the opportunities for program development, the flexibility of programs in meeting changing demands, the price and the cost of price discounting, and the prospective student's perceptions of the value of the education offered by the institution.

Demographic trends and interests in particular programs are well documented, particularly among the 18- to 24-year-old population. The 30 to 40 percent decrease in this population over the next 10 years is already being offset by increasing participation rates among an older student population. Many smaller institutions have proved their resiliency by creating programs that meet the needs of the older, part-time student. Evening programs have emerged, off-campus offerings have become common, and the weekend college is now the dominant educational curriculum at some institutions. Mundelein College in Chicago and Hiram College in Ohio, among others, have initiated efforts to provide special services and areas on campus for adult students.

As one assesses current and future market demand, the "survival curriculum" appears to include some or all of the following: programs in the health and managerial sciences, in information systems and computer science, and in the fine and applied arts. The availability of these curriculum offerings coupled with opportunities for field internships, work-study arrangements, and foreign study provides an attractive educational "package." When such educational opportunities are offered to older students interested in part-time study in the evenings or on weekends on campus or at off-campus sites, both demand and the financial viability of the institution are enhanced.

Once the program is defined and made accessible to students and the market is sensitized to the offerings of the institution, the interest of the market turns to price, both in the out-of-pocket sense (market price) and, increasingly, in the rate-of-return sense (future earnings). Potential students, however, are less concerned about price if career opportunities and related salaries are substantial. Moreover, because of the variety of student aid programs, price can be marketed in such a way as to reduce the drain on family resources. Thus, perceived value is more important than gross price, and price is even less of a factor when it can be prorated over an extended period of time. One thing for certain is that the American public is well sensitized to the use of and advantages of installment credit options.

If, as is usually the case, the economics of the institution is the determining factor in projecting desired enrollments, then the question becomes: How can the number of full-paying tuition equivalents rather than just the number of full-paying students be increased? The financial objective is to increase the net-to-budget tuition figure. Whether the student aid budget should increase is determined by the quality and the quantity of full-pay students in the applicant pool. However, raw numbers suggest that, in most cases, it is almost impossible to increase the number of full-pay students.

Annually, no more than 200,000 graduating secondary school seniors and their families can afford the average cost of attendance at public institutions; fewer than 100,000 can afford the cost at private institutions. The average annual cost of public higher education in 1983 including tuition, fees, room, board, and books was estimated at between $4,500 and $5,000, and the average cost for private higher

Table 1

National College-Bound Students: Upper Income Group

Characteristics	*1982*	*1984*	*1987*
Case 1: SAT V&M* 1100 or class rank top 20%	27,990	25,247	24,515
Case 2: SAT V&M* 550 each or class rank top 20%	16,959	15,297	14,853
Case 3: SAT V&M* 1200 or class rank top 20%	15,608	14,078	13,670
Case 4: SAT V&M* 1200 or class rank top 10%	11,758	10,606	10,298

**Verbal and Math score*

Table 2

National College-Bound Students by Income Level: SAT Verbal and Math Scores above 550, Class Rank Top 20%

Family Income	*1982*	*1984*	*1987*
$ 0- 3,000	312	281	273
$ 3,001-12,000	4,888	4,409	4,281
$12,001-21,000	11,857	10,695	10,385
$21,001-30,000	14,769	13,322	12,936
$30,001-40,000	17,476	15,763	15,306
$40,001-50,000	10,401	9,382	9,110
Over $50,000	16,959	15,297	14,853
Total	76,662	69,149	67,144

Note: These projections are understated because they do not include college-bound students who have taken only the ACT.

education at between $7,500 and $8,000. Thus, if enrollments are to be achieved, it is necessary to discount the cost of attendance.

As we assess the student aid costs related to achieving enrollment objectives, we find that the pool of paying customers at high ability levels is quite small indeed (Table 1).

For example, in 1982, there were only 27,990 high school graduates who fell in the top 20 percent of their class, achieved a composite score of 1100 or higher, and whose family income was in excess of $50,000. By 1987 that number will drop to 24,515. If the composite score is increased to 1200 and the other variables remain constant, the number of students meeting these criteria in 1982 was only 15,608 (Case 3). By 1987, this number will decrease to 13,670. If family income is not considered, with Verbal and Math scores above 550 and top 20 percent of the class as parameters, the potential pool in 1982 was 76,662, and by 1987 the pool will have decreased to 67,144 (Table 2). Thus even independent of family income, the size of the high ability pool is a small fraction of the total market (Koester, 1983).

We at Northwestern have estimated that independent of income, in 1984 no more than 2.8 percent of the total high school graduate population of 69,149 could meet the university's admission criteria. These criteria are defined as 1100 on the SAT and a "B" average in high school. Such an analysis suggests but one alternative—if an institution wishes to maintain its enrollment as well as some semblance of quality, it must have a substantial financial aid program. Thus, as we attempt to manage our enrollments to achieve both our revenue goals and maintain our academic standards, greater retention of enrolled students becomes one primary objective of our enrollment management plan, while the other is to attract those students most likely to be satisfied with the educational offerings of the institution. Both of these objectives have a cost factor, one in terms of improved programs and services and the other in terms of student aid, neither of which can be overlooked.

As college and university budgets become more tuition-intensive, the dollars that flow to the financial aid program are of increasing concern. Many view student aid dollars as a loss in income rather than as a necessary investment. As the preceding suggests, the real challenge is to increase the dollars that flow to the budget from tuition revenue. Reducing student aid costs is but one way to achieve this objective, and because a shortfall in enrollments is likely to be the outcome, decreasing student aid may not be a viable alternative for most institutions.

Commonly, institutions will increase their financial aid budget by the same percentage that tuition is increased. This approach assumes that family income and student self-help will increase at the same rate as the increase in tuition and that there have been no changes in government aid programs. What I am suggesting is that any enrollment goal has a cost factor and that the more refined the enrollment goal is in terms of a distribution of interest, quality, and diversity, the higher the student aid cost.

In analyzing revenues from enrollments, the critical variable is the net-to-budget tuition figure which represents gross tuition revenues minus institutional grant aid. Once the desired increase in the net-to-budget tuition revenue figure is determined, various options are available to the institution. The announced tuition increase may have to be more than desired to compensate for required increases in the student aid budget, and/or it may be possible to increase substantially student aid and enrollment at the same time. In this latter case, the typical student would be paying less in terms of out-of-pocket cost, and yet the net-to-budget tuition figure would increase because of marginal growth in enrollment.

Alternatively, enrollment could decrease as long as the net-to-budget figure was achieved. Under this scenario, there would be fewer dollars available for student aid. This would presume either a sufficient number of paying customers in the applicant pool to make up for the decreases in institutional aid or increases in external student assistance.

Such a net-to-budget analysis requires that the director of admissions and/or the appropriate committee concerned about enrollment assume responsibility for delineating various options. The problem is that the skills necessary to assess the various options available to most institutions are often not available. Thus, the standard procedure is to increase tuition by a given percentage and to increase the student aid budget by a corresponding amount. Additionally, it may be possible to increase tuition without expanding the student aid budget substantially if the expected self-help component is not excessive and can be increased.

To review, realistic options related to a desired increase in tuition revenue are: (1) increase tuition, increase grant aid, maintain current enrollments; (2) increase tuition, maintain or decrease grant aid, maintain or decrease enrollments; (3) stabilize or decrease tuition, decrease student grant aid, and maintain or increase enrollments; (4) increase tuition, decrease grant aid (increase self-help), maintain or decrease enrollment.

Each of these permutations must be considered, for each can result in a substantial net increase in tuition revenue. The most appropriate combination depends upon the market position of the institution at various prices and the size of the present grant aid budget. It is quite possible that an institution may have a much stronger market position at its market price than at its list price. This situation would suggest that a college could keep its list price constant but increase its market price, thereby decreasing institutional grant aid and thus increasing net tuition revenues.

The details of such options matter little to the student and his or her family. What is critical is the out-of-pocket cost or market price to the family at any given time. Since most families pay a discounted rate (an amount much less than the actual cost of attendance), each family pays a separate market price based upon the financial resources of the family, the amount of expected student self-help, and the financial capability of the institution to vary the market price in relation to individual family needs. What needs to be conveyed to prospective students and their families is the market price, the perceived value of the desired program as defined by market position, and the potential future earn-

ings of graduates in the program. What needs to be watched is the behavior of competing institutions.

Market analysis: Is there a "best- fit group"?

The college admission selection process is one that matches certain types of potential students with specific institutions and with specific programs within our colleges and universities. To a great extent, it is also a subtle self-selection process. To recognize that such a selection process exists is to begin to ask a variety of other questions that will assist the admissions department in its efforts to achieve institutional enrollment goals. "Who enrolls and why, who does not and why, who persists to graduation and why, who leaves and why," represent a sample of the types of questions that each institution must answer in order to address problems of retention and market identification. Once such questions are answered, our energies can turn to identifying potential markets that provide the best fit for the institution.

For example, exogenous factors that often affect retention are: levels of ability of the student body, geographical distribution, variation in high school preparation, and socioeconomic class. Students of high ability levels may be transferring or dropping out simply because they are bored or find few people like themselves within the institution. The residential institution may find that students from distant markets are far more likely to transfer than students from local or regional markets.

A not uncommon finding is to learn that students who have a good background in math and science are more likely to complete their education because they are more task-oriented than other students. Social and economic class can be a cause of attrition if students fail to find the proper subculture which reinforces their values or if they simply no longer feel that the perceived value of the education they are receiving is worth the price.

Appropriate subculture identification, however, is a double-edged sword. The greater the variety of subgroups within an institution, the greater the likelihood that different students will find different groups with whom to identify. This greater opportunity for identification is likely to have a positive effect on retention. At the same time, having a large number of subgroups tends to cause stereotypic communication problems: blacks and whites do not talk, intrafraternity groups fight with one another, theater types cannot get along with engineers, athletes harass gays, etc.

A great variety of students requires additional support services as well as far-reaching recruitment efforts, all of which translates into a need for more dollars. The least expensive student body to recruit and maintain is one that is fairly homogeneous and regional, given the fact that an institution has a strong position in its primary market.

Once the character of the student body is analytically quantified, an institution has the opportunity not only to address its environment but also to seek enrollments from markets made up of students who are most likely to persist. Given the nature of the institution, is there a "best-fit group"? There certainly is for many institutions when one considers such factors as religious and social values and the nature of their student bodies. To cite one obvious example, there is not likely to be a high percentage of Jewish students at a Southern Baptist institution. Less obvious, but yet distinct, are the types of students that would be attracted to Columbia in contrast to the University of Southern California. Often the best fit is not as clear as in these examples. Nonetheless, recruitment plans can be targeted to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and improve yield.

A process of classification and quantification by type provides administrators at each institution with the capability to answer the question: How can we optimize recruitment efforts to penetrate the largest possible market in the most efficient and personalized way? Such an objective cannot be realized simply by expanding staff and visiting more secondary schools; yet that remains the principal tactic when an institution becomes concerned about its enrollment.

Where are the markets? One can identify three principal markets: the primary, the secondary, and the tertiary, as well as specific subgroups within each market (Ihlanfeldt, 1980). The primary market is one with a high yield when yield is defined as the conversion ratios of prospects to matriculants, applicants to matriculants, and admitted to matriculants.

Generally, a high yield market has some geographical or economic constraints: geographical, in that the market probably exists within a specific radius of the institution; economic, in that the students from given socioeconomic backgrounds are more or less attracted to given types of institutions.

The secondary market produces applications for admission but fewer student enrollments. Secondary markets are larger than the primary market and far more random in production. They usually exist beyond a radius of 300 miles from the institution, although many high schools within a radius of 300 miles would be identified as low yield secondary markets. Thus, yield, not location, is the determining factor.

A tertiary market is not only unpredictable but also often unknown. For some colleges an unknown market may be identified as older, ethnic, religious—one which has demonstrated little interest in the institution previously.

Traditionally students, particularly those from major metropolitan areas, can generally be further classified according to type of secondary school attended—national, regional, or local. Colleges and universities can similarly be classified by the types of secondary schools represented in their student body. A national secondary school is one that will send as many as 90 to 95 percent of its students on to college. These students, because of their previous experiences, are not inhibited in their college choice by psychological or geographical boundaries and, clearly, can differentiate between and among the most distinguished colleges and universities in the country. The background of these students is generally upper-middle to upper class and they attend such public secondary schools as Beverly Hills, New Trier, Shaker Heights, Scarsdale, and Newton, as well as New England and Mid-Atlantic area private preparatory schools.

A regional secondary school sends 40 to 60 percent on to college, but seldom sends a student beyond a radius of 200 to 300 miles from the student's home. A local secondary school sends no more than 20 to 30 percent on to some type of postsecondary educa-

tion at the time of graduation. Such students are likely to commute and generally come from a lower economic background. Students attending local and regional secondary schools generally do not differentiate very well between the reputations of various colleges beyond their immediate area. To such students, most colleges tend to look alike, and the flagship public university is often considered to be "The University."

A college classified as national mainly attracts students from national secondary schools and from regional and local schools within the geographical radius of the college's primary market area. Such a college would not likely attract students from local and regional high schools outside its primary area.

A regional college is more likely to attract students from regional and local secondary schools within its primary market and less likely to enroll students from national secondary schools. It would be rare for a regional institution to attract students from any national school in a secondary market on a regular basis. Students who elect to attend a regional institution and who live outside its primary market usually do so either because of emotional ties such as being the son or daughter of an alumnus, or to pursue a specific program opportunity. Occasionally, certain programs within a regional institution may have a national market. This type of quantitative analysis permits the admissions office to define various markets and to determine the market position of the institution's programs in terms of their ability to draw from certain types of secondary schools.

Quantification of the types of secondary schools represented in the student body permits the development of a plan concentrating resources on those types of secondary schools that have been the most productive in the past. At Northwestern we have found a correlation between retention and the distance between a student's home, the type of secondary school attended, and the institution. For example, students who enter the university from geographical, secondary markets, and who attended a regional or local secondary school are more likely to transfer than students who live within a 500-mile radius of Northwestern. Clearly, there are other factors such as social class and available group identification that affect retention but geographical distance and type of secondary school attended are discriminating variables.

A student who attended a national secondary school outside of Northwestern's primary geographical market is more likely to graduate from Northwestern than a student who attended a regional secondary school in a remote market. Thus, the number of students who enroll from secondary markets is a factor that should be considered in projecting recruitment costs and enrollment yields.

The working adult market can be segmented into part-time students whose interests are restricted to single courses and those interested in seeking a degree, with further subdivision by day, evening, weekend, on-campus and off-campus attendance, ZIP code, employment status, reading and listening habits, hobbies, etc. The more that is known about the characteristics of the working adult, the easier it is to direct specific promotional efforts toward a primary market or to redefine and expand the primary market through general or direct mail advertising.

A recruitment plan for a college classified as national should involve attempting to penetrate thoroughly a geographical area within 300 to 500 miles of the institution. Additional resources should be focused on students attending national secondary schools outside of the geographical area of the college's primary market.

A regional institution should focus nearly all of its efforts within its primary market area except for a limited direct mail effort in secondary markets contiguous to the primary market. Alumni should be used to follow up on a personal basis in the secondary markets, but high school visits by professional staff in secondary markets are not efficient. A local institution is probably local because it is a commuter college. Such an institution will be able to attract students from secondary schools that are classified as local, regional, and national within a five- to 10-mile area; the greatest concentration of prospective students will come from local and regional secondary schools.

Market penetration: Communicating with "best-fit" students

Once an institution has identified its mission, assessed the market position of its programs, and determined the type of student who is most likely to benefit from the experiences offered, the objective is to develop a strategic recruitment plan that will enable the institution to achieve its enrollment objectives. Although the development and implementation of this plan is the responsibility of the department of admissions, faculty and other administrators should be involved. Too often the admissions staff is isolated from the rest of the campus community, frequently as a result of their own choosing. A director of admissions must recognize that the risks of isolation are far greater than the risks of involvement.

As a first step, the director must rethink the mode of operation of the admissions office and consider a transfer from a sales-oriented to a management-oriented operation. The sales model whereby admissions officers travel extensively, visiting secondary schools generally outside of the primary market, is no longer appropriate and is quite costly. The management model involves not only research and planning, but also a communication process employing a substantial number of volunteers. This process should be viewed as similar in its organization to the United Way/Crusade of Mercy. Such an organization would be comprised of volunteers, principally alumni and enrolled students who are loyal to the institution and willing to commit the time necessary to encourage students and their parents to take a closer look at the college.

A good source of potential alumni volunteers are alumni who were involved in campus activities when they were students. Such an approach would involve up to 100 volunteers for a small college and as many as 1,000 for a large university. Volunteers should be carefully identified and required to attend workshops on a regular basis. Their activities must be monitored by the admissions office, and they should receive frequent reports on the status of potential students within their geographical areas.

Enrolled students should be organized to facilitate campus visits, to contact students during vacation periods, and to follow up inquiries through phone contact. Faculty should be involved only in presenting information related to their subject and not required to contact prospective students to discuss the institution in general. Because enrolled students remain the best representatives of the institution, faculty time is best spent working with students who are already on campus.

To penetrate old as well as new markets more effectively, the student recruitment cycle needs to be accelerated by at least six months. The components of the marketing plan should include the following: identification of a larger pool of prospective students with characteristics similar to students currently attending the institution; a variety of direct mail activities; on- and off-campus programs including visits to secondary schools that have produced students in the past; home visits directed at the most talented students in the applicant pool; and telephone contact between alumni and the parents of prospective students, as well as between enrolled and prospective students.

All the components of such a marketing plan, as outlined below, may not apply to all colleges in all situations. Each college must adopt those strategies that it can best implement at a given time.

- Focus upon, or create if one does not exist, a primary market within a 300-mile radius of the institution.
- Develop an early contact program to increase the name recognition and visibility of the institution.
- Develop a data base which includes the names and addresses of freshmen and sophomores by market area/feeder secondary schools, students with appropriately defined characteristics provided through the Student Search Service and/or the Education Opportunity Service, and those who make self-initiated inquiries.
- Use direct mail as frequently as necessary to stimulate additional demand. (Direct mail should provide an easy response capability and permit identification of interests. Once interests have been identified, information should be targeted toward such interests.)
- Develop an alumni admissions program in five to 10 cities. (Begin with a least two alumni in each city and conduct a workshop on campus for these volunteers in the early fall. Secondary market cities contiguous to primary market areas are good places to begin involving alumni.)
- Except for a limited number of well-targeted secondary school visits, reduce the number of such visits. Secondary school visits should be directed toward sophomores and juniors who have previously received notification from the college that a representative will be visiting their school and should be targeted toward secondary schools identified in ACT and ATP profile reports. National secondary schools and college fairs outside the primary market can be visited by alumni. Local and regional high schools that lie outside the primary market area should not be visited.
- Offer on-campus Sunday programs in the fall and spring for prospective students and their parents who live within the immediate area, and on a Sunday/Monday overnight basis for prospective students who live outside the immediate area. (The principal model should be a reverse college night, and the faculty should be very much involved in presenting various programs. A similar program should be offered in the spring for applicants, accepted students, and transfer candidates. An overnight stay on campus is the most effective recruitment tool and will also facilitate retention because students who find the match to be a bad fit after a campus visit are not likely to enroll.)
- Use enrolled students and alumni to contact prospective students locally after they have indicated an interest in the college. (Attempt to match enrolled students with prospective students on the basis of not only geography but also academic or extracurricular interest.)
- Host off-campus programs in a neutral environment, preferably at a conveniently located hotel or civic facility. (Alumni should be present and the program should be conducted by a member of the admissions staff and, if possible, a member of the faculty.)
- Host on-campus workshops for high school teachers and counselors and transfer counselors from community colleges.
- Visit the homes, on a selective basis, of the most talented prospects in the active file.
- Establish a hometown news release program that sends mailings on a timely basis. (These releases should be personalized, not "canned.")
- Be aware that every visitor to the campus may be either a potential student or an ambassador of goodwill. (Summer camp programs and corporate workshops on the campus offer ideal opportunities to promote the institution.)

Finally, consider the preceding steps as objectives to be achieved over time. Although all these suggestions cannot be implemented immediately, the entire system should be operational within a three-year time frame. The successful adoption of such a plan will require a well-organized admissions department with a management rather than a sales orientation that is attentive to detail. In such an office, individual members of the staff should be assigned specific projects.

Once a principal project assignment is made, all other members of the staff should, in varying degrees, play a supporting role. For example, the project director of the alumni admissions program should view other members of the staff as assisting him or her in achieving the defined objectives. The same could be said for any other component of the plan. The role of the director of admissions is to manage the activities of the various project directors, to establish priorities, and to monitor the competing interests of the project directors. The basic management objective is to develop a staff that views its individual responsibilities as complementary in achieving enrollment goals.

Conclusion

What has been presented here is a methodology by which colleges and universities can improve their enrollment and revenue base through more sophisticated market research and price and student aid analyses. Strategies to achieve greater market penetration were presented and an outline

provided to assist more enlightened admissions officers in developing an admission marketing plan specific to their institutions. The challenge to the admissions staff at most institutions is to reorient their thinking from that of a sales force to that of a management team—a management team comprised of individuals with complementary skills working in concert to achieve more effective market penetration through the implementation of a sophisticated communication plan. Such an approach will not only benefit the institution but will ensure that students are choosing to attend institutions at which they are most likely to flourish and succeed.

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Section 2

Market Research: Putting Data to Work

Knowledge Is Power

Research can help your marketing program succeed
by Robert M. Smith

Item: A large urban university wondered why potential adult students were not attracted to its programs. Through a mail survey it learned that adults were apprehensive because they believed the average age of the university's students was 19. (The actual average was 27.) Knowing this marketing problem, the university mounted a campaign focusing on the adult nature of its campus.

Item: An institution had difficulty mustering public support for its budget adjustments in the state legislature. Through a questionnaire, it discovered that citizens thought the college's budget was four times its actual level. The college planned a communications campaign to correct that perception.

These institutions solved their marketing problems through research. Today, intuition and hunches are not enough. We need to base decisions on solid facts. Yet fewer than half of the institutions responding to a recent survey by James C. Blackburn of the University of North Carolina at Asheville were using a comprehensive marketing plan based on research.

If you want to base your program planning on specific, measurable data, make it your business to know the basic types of research available.

To achieve reliable results, you should conduct your research objectively, without regard to "preferred" outcomes. There are three major types of market research: exploratory, developmental, and evaluative.

I. EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

In the planning stages of your program, you use research to identify the marketing need or problem.

Exploratory research attempts to answer these questions:

- Who are your publics?
- What are their characteristics, needs and interests?
- What channels should you use to reach the target publics?
- Who are your competitors?
- What is your institution's image?
- Will there be significant changes in the market (e.g., the public, the competitors, the institution itself)?

You can gather data internally and externally to answer these questions.

Internal research

You should start by gathering internal data. Examine the records and documents available on campus. Interview instrumental program and curriculum people. Too often the daily work of development, institutional relations, and admissions officers keeps them from becoming familiar with the central activities of their institution. They miss valuable information that they could use in a comprehensive marketing plan.

Don't forget to review historical information and institutional characteristics. You're looking for the special qualities you can emphasize in your marketing plan.

Make a thorough study of records and documents to turn up evidence of demographic patterns and geographic enrollment shifts. Use interviews to explore such topics as your institution's curriculum strengths and the faculty's reputation.

External research

Your external research should focus on the marketplace itself. A survey is the primary technique for gathering data from the marketplace. There are two broad types of surveys: questionnaire and interview.

Questionnaire. You can use questions to find out the public's perceptions and attitudes about your institution. A questionnaire is an inexpensive way to obtain a lot of information in a brief time. Questionnaires are better suited to gathering quantitative data—for example, that 40 percent of the respondents have had some college courses, but have not completed their degrees—than qualitative data—for example, that your university is perceived as the party school in your state.

With a questionnaire, you will obtain information that is generally accurate but it depends on how precise the questions are. The best questionnaire is brief and well-focused. It gives the respondent ample opportunity to express completely his or her perceptions or attitudes, even within forced-choice check boxes.

If you have problems with questionnaires, they will probably relate to construction difficulties and response biases. Questionnaires are only as good as the questions they contain. If you haven't asked the best questions to find what you need to know, it's virtually impossible to collect clarifying or follow-up data.

Another problem is that people who return questionnaires can reflect a biased segment of the original sample. This is why selecting a statistically representative sample and getting an adequate response are essential.

Here is information you need to decide what research technique to use, whether you are gathering data from on-campus groups or external audiences.

Interview. There are two kinds of interviews: individual and group.

Individual interviews. You can conduct individual interviews in person or by telephone. A major advantage of the individual interview is that you can obtain complex information easily. Respondents are free to develop their own answers and to provide details and explanations. And the interviewer has the flexibility to follow up on the person's answers.

A disadvantage is that the effects of the interviewer on responses are greater with face-to-face interviews. Because the respondent can pick up subtle, nonverbal clues the interviewer may give, the respondent may be more likely to give socially preferred answers. In other words, it's easy to lead the witness without meaning to.

Telephone interviews are easier to administer. They can be as good as face-to-face interviews for brief sessions (less than 15 minutes) but not for long sessions. However, personal demographic information or answers to sensitive questions are more difficult to get by telephone.

Both telephone and face-to-face in-

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terviews have disadvantages. They require a great deal of administrative time. Soliciting respondents and assuring that you have a usable sample is difficult, particularly with random samples. Getting reliable data depends on the expertise of the interviewer, and it may be difficult to obtain competent, trained interviewers. Finally, protecting the respondents' privacy and assuring confidentiality are difficult problems that can influence the validity of responses. For example, people may be reluctant to give accurate salary information in an interview because they may fear that the interviewer will not keep the information confidential.

Group interviews. The group interview method is useful when you don't need a random sample, when confidentiality is not important, and when you want to obtain a great deal of qualitative information in a short period of time.

When you're planning a marketing strategy, the group interview can be extraordinarily valuable in determining perceptions and misconceptions. It is also useful for collecting reactions to marketing ideas before you invest a lot of time and money in them.

- The technique: Group interviews (often called focus groups) involve eight to 10 respondents. "Togetherness" stimulates discussions that yield a lot of information.

Using a brief outline, the interviewer acts more as a moderator than an interviewer. His or her role is to keep the discussion on the topic and to encourage respondents to talk freely. The choice of this person is critical: A poor moderator can waste time, allow the group to be influenced by dominant participants, and permit the session to create more problems than it sets out to solve.

- Applications: You can assemble different groups to respond to different market issues. For example, the admissions office could solicit data from such groups as high school counselors, high school seniors, parents, and other publics. The development office could gather information from contributors and noncontributors as well as from other publics identified as part of its special marketing plan.

II. DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

To test the strategies that evolve from the marketing plan, you can conduct developmental research. In the developmental stage of a marketing plan, research helps ensure that the plan is being effectively executed. Your questions might include: Is the message understandable? Is it appealing? Is it relevant?

Developmental research attempts to determine whether messages will be on target by pretesting them in the marketplace. Pretesting involves using rough artwork, layouts, scripts, and storyboards. You want to find out if these will be effective in getting your message across.

Pretesting can be enlightening. Designers don't always know how viewers will perceive a layout. Writers cannot always predict how people will react to their material or even if their audience will understand it. No matter how attractive a booklet is or how many awards it may have won, if it does not satisfy the marketing objective, it is worthless. The best way to know if a piece will satisfy the objective is to test it. There are two major techniques: readability testing and message testing.

Readability testing

The purpose of readability testing is to predict the reading comprehension level a person must have to understand the materials. Authors of college publications, who are usually college graduates, often make assumptions about how understandable their materials are. They tend to write "Ph.D. prose" even for high school or general public audiences. If your target audience can't comprehend your messages with ease, you're wasting valuable time and money.

Most institutions would be surprised to discover how difficult their material is to read. I once conducted readability tests of college viewbooks (promotional material intended to recruit freshmen) for four major state universities, one private college, and two community colleges.

I found that three of the universities' viewbooks required the reading level of a college senior, far exceeding the level of the target audience. The other university and the private college had viewbooks that required the reading level of a college junior. Meanwhile, the two community colleges' viewbooks had a reading level equivalent to a high school graduate or college freshman. That result was coincidental, however. None of the institutions had ever used readability testing in developing their recruitment materials.

Readability testing uses a simple formula based on language variables such as word and sentence length. It costs nothing to use and can take as little as 15 minutes to perform. The accuracy is statistically sufficient to make it a valuable test. *(See p. 78 for the formula.)*

Message testing

Message testing determines the ability of a message to attract attention and be relevant, believable, interesting, and informative. It can also test recall of important ideas and assess copy strengths and weaknesses.

In message testing, you *interview* individuals or groups to obtain their reactions to your message. The respondents are usually a sample from the target market. (Although you can *mail* the material to respondents and have them complete a questionnaire, that technique is not normally as successful as interviewing.)

The best procedure is to show the material to the respondents, and then ask them to recall main ideas. Collect verbatim oral responses and record them on a printed form. Compare the responses to your intended results. Ask follow-up questions during the interview to clarify answers or collect other important information. (This is another good place to use group interviews.)

Message testing provides an objective and systematic approach to test your material's impact on a sample of the target audience. It answers important questions about the content and format of your proposed publications before you publish these expensive materials. The testing techniques are relatively simple, and the results can be valuable in shaping the final market strategy.

III. EVALUATIVE RESEARCH

Evaluative research is intended to complete the market planning cycle. It assesses the effectiveness of your planning and implementation. The questions are relatively simple to ask, but difficult to answer: What happened? Did we achieve our objectives? Was our effort successful?

Evaluative research attempts to

measure results that can be attributed to the marketing strategy. If you don't try to relate results to strategies, you will lack evidence of your effort's effectiveness. Then you'll end up forging ahead blindly.

You have to plan ways to measure outcomes. The best way is usually to compare results over time. Therefore, you have to collect baseline data before you implement the market plan. You then compare that with your subsequent results.

For example, if enrollment increased by 15 percent during the use of a new marketing strategy, you might be able to attribute the change to your strategy. But to be sure, you would have to discount the effects of other variables—and you could do that through evaluation techniques.

The simplest form of outcome assessment is careful record-keeping. You can improve your record-keeping by several methods. For example, when a publication includes a mail-back card, some marketers will use different box numbers or toll-free telephone numbers on a periodic basis. In this way they can track the activity motivated by the publication according to the time span of their market strategy.

On phone inquiries, an additional moment to collect information from the caller can provide valuable insight about which marketing effort prompted the call. With careful record-keeping, you can discover the effectiveness of the individual elements of a coordinated marketing campaign.
In addition, you should use "satisfaction" surveys and follow-up questionnaires. By drawing a sample from the target audience, you can assess your results. Did the intended publics receive the material? What was the reaction? Why did some people not respond? Follow-up surveys can raise other questions important to evaluating the market strategies.

Evaluative research is valuable in concluding one market cycle and beginning the next. You'll find that it will provide you with data that you can use to build future plans and strategies. Over time, if you consistently use evaluation research, you will develop more sophisticated and accountable marketing techniques. In addition, you'll have a solid foundation for your advancement and marketing program. **cnsa**

The Perfect Match

Research lets you help students choose the right college
by Ronald J. Ingersoll and John W. Klockentager

The principal objective of your student recruitment effort should be to help prospective students make the right decision about what college to attend. If students come to the right institution, they will stay, graduate, and become happy alumni. If they come to the wrong institution, they may be unhappy and leave. Or if they stay, they may become bad advertisements for your school, college, or university. In short, a good recruitment strategy will go a long way toward solving your retention problems.

Communication is the foundation of a successful student recruitment program. If you can express the spirit of your institution clearly to students, you can help them make the right college decision. At the same time, you can help your institution by boosting its enrollment.

Effective communication takes time and money, but the dividends are enormous. Research is a vital part of the process. It helps you determine:

- What should I—and can I—say about my institution in recruitment publications?
- How do I organize the communication factors into a successful recruitment strategy?

What should I say?

Students with whom you communicate have certain perceptions about the college experience. They also have specific expectations about your institution based on what they know or have heard about it. If your institution can talk about itself in a way that fits these perceptions and expectations, students will more readily identify with what they hear. Then they will be more likely to apply and enroll.

For example, if a student expects college to prepare him or her for a career and perceives a liberal arts institution as unable to do this, you must address this issue if yours is a liberal arts institution.

What can I say?

Knowing what you should say is not enough. Your communications must rest solidly on facts. Suppose you find that your prospects are looking for an exciting urban institution with excellent faculty advisers, but your rural college has a traditional program and professors who are hard to see. You are in a real bind. You will need to appeal to a different type of prospect or work to change programs and services.

Armed with the facts both about your institution and about the perceptions and expectations of the present and prospective students, faculty, and administrators, you will know what you *can* say about your college.

For example, even if every objective measure—qualifications of faculty, class size, quality of facilities—indicates that your college is strong academically, your present students may perceive it as weak. If so, this needs attention before you can communicate effectively with potential students and those who influence them. You may need to let people on campus know how important this perception is, have students meet in focus groups to clarify the problem, and prepare a plan that emphasizes the institution's academic strength.

Information you collect through research can provide the basis for developing your communication strategy. Organize your research around four W's—who, what, when, and where.

Whom to survey

You should probably include the following populations in your basic research plan:

Ronald J. Ingersoll is president and John W Klockentager is vice president of the Ingersoll Group, Inc., a college admissions consulting firm in Chicago, Illinois.

• *Present students.* Find out what the group as a whole thinks about your institution. Then break the results down according to class year, sex, and various majors.

• *High school seniors.* Learn how prospects feel about your institution and use this data to determine what you should be saying. If there is relatively low awareness of your institution among high school seniors in your recruiting area, focus on those seniors who request information but do not apply. You may be able to learn more from these "lost inquiries" than from high school seniors in general.

• *Faculty and administration.* Compare the views of this influential group with the opinions of present and potential students.

What to ask

Organize your research around the following issues:

• What do current and prospective students expect of their college years?

• What are the characteristics of their ideal college experience?

• How important are each of these characteristics in their choice of which college to attend?

• How do they perceive your institution in regard to these characteristics?

How to gather the data

The information you need is not easy to get. You have to select groups to survey; develop, pretest, and administer the questionnaires; collect and analyze the data; and apply what you learn. You may need to educate yourself on survey techniques, use the services of an on- or off-campus consultant, or do both.

Next, decide what type of survey(s) to use—mail, telephone, personal interview, or self-administered. Self-administered surveys are printed questionnaires that respondents fill out but that are not sent by mail. For example, you might ask faculty members to fill out questionnaires at a faculty meeting.

Although we prefer to gather data through self-administered surveys, we find personal interviews extremely useful. Before we develop our written questionnaire, we interview faculty and students to help us pinpoint areas of institutional strength and weakness. Later, interviews provide clues about what is really being said in self-administered surveys. We also uncover themes and concepts for good publications during interviews.

When to do research

It will generally take about four months to complete research of the types we're describing. You can undertake it at any time during the year, but the best time is usually during the fall. This gives you the winter and spring months to analyze the data and apply it to new communication strategies for the following academic year. The worst time for research is during a period of campus controversy—say just after a favorite faculty member has been denied tenure. You want to learn objective opinions, unclouded by emotion.

How to use research data

Once you assemble the data, you should use it to develop a written promotional strategy. This systematic statement outlines how you will communicate with potential students and their "influentials" (parents, guidance counselors, and others).

This strategy should include these elements:

• *Personality*: the way you want people to feel about your institution from the moment they see your material. You create personality through the artwork, type, color, and layout in your publications.

• *Concept*: the basic theme that integrates art and copy; without this, much of the copy may not fit together or may not support the art.

• *Theme art*: the graphic theme that represents your institutional personality throughout most of your publications. (Some institutions use photography instead of theme art. We prefer art because photos from one campus can look much like those from another.)

• *Primary appeals*: those three or four features of your institution that will produce applications. These are generally factual attributes. For example, the programs you offer, the quality of your institution as represented by faculty, and special opportunities for involvement such as internships.

• *Secondary appeals*: those three or four features that will result in deposits and enrollment. Generally these are the qualities that will convince students that your institution is the best place to be for four years.

• *The positives and negatives of your institution*: the good points to capitalize on and the weak points to address. You may downplay or ignore some negatives (for example, size) or you may find ways to interpret that negative as a positive (a small college stressing an intimate atmosphere; a large university emphasizing a wide choice of programs and life styles).

How does this negative-positive approach work? One institution we worked with was using as its principal theme, "We are a small liberal arts college for women." This immediately highlighted what research showed to be the three biggest negatives—small, liberal arts, and women's college—in the minds of potential students.

Meanwhile, this college had one of the area's best and most responsive faculties in terms of credentials and in the opinion of current students that we surveyed. We advised a shift to a theme emphasizing the quality of the faculty. This change in promotional strategy produced dramatic recruitment results.

The other important areas of the promotional strategy include how you will project the items above. The major methods include personal contact, publications, advertising, and public relations techniques such as special events and media placements. Your research should provide insight into what means of communication belongs in each aspect of the promotional strategy.

As we've outlined, survey research gives hard data on which to build a program of communication for student recruitment. It can also help your institution by providing direct evidence of problems that administrators and faculty members may have tried to ignore. Once research documents the problems, decision makers may be motivated to make changes.

You can take much of the guesswork out of finding the right students for your institution—and helping students make the right enrollment decisions—if you skillfully use market research. The result should be happier students and a more prosperous institution. CASE

Defog with Research

See where you're going in student recruitment with a program based on market research
by Ed Meek and Gerald Skelly

Positioning an institution in the marketplace without research is like attempting to parallel park with your car windows fogged up. If you can't see where you are going—or where you have been—you are likely to bounce off a bumper or two and still not wind up where you want to be.

Market research in support of recruitment and retention is as essential to institutional prosperity as the course catalog is to a student's academic progress. Both are road maps leading to planned, scheduled goals and objectives.

Although the catalog is widely accepted, market research is not. Yet attitude and opinion research shouldn't scare you. With relative ease you can undertake studies that will ultimately help you recruit and retain students, enrich on- and off-campus programs, improve internal relations, conserve resources, and win greater public support.

The steps are simple. Plan and carry out the research, analyze the data, translate the data into specific action programs, and later evaluate those programs in terms of measurable results.

Research by objectives

Market research is most effective when you clearly define its objectives and develop a careful plan. Your goal is to identify key constituencies and develop both informal listening and formal research mechanisms for each. The information you get will provide a continuing means of directing and evaluating institutional programs.

We suggest that you follow this nine-point plan as you start attitude and opinion research.

1. *Obtain top-level commitment.* Have the president initiate the research and make all announcements to faculty and other administrators indicating that reports will be made directly to the president's office and that actions will be taken based on the findings. Your president's commitment is essential.

2. *Determine your specific research needs.* A shotgun approach to attitude and opinion research rarely works. What do you need to know? Distinguish between information you need and that which is merely interesting.

3. *Define institutional goals and objectives in terms that can be measured.* Don't say that you want "more students" or "better students." Say you want a 5-percent enrollment increase or a 20-point increase in average SAT scores within the next two years.

4. *Set up a committee on recruitment and retention to oversee the research and to take appropriate action.* Take care to have the committee represent admissions, public relations, publications, alumni, development, academic divisions, and the student body. It should include faculty members, staff members, and administrators as well as students.

5. *Identify those publics whose attitudes and opinions are most important in attaining your goals.* These should include prospective students, parents, high school and community counselors, alumni, faculty and staff, and currently enrolled students. Other groups might include community leaders, board members, legislative leaders, and members of other support groups.

6. *Determine the groups with the highest priority and make these the focus of initial research.* Probably you can't research all groups initially. However, your long-term plan should include all key publics.

7. *Develop effective questionnaires.* Ask questions to uncover what you want to find out from research, but also give respondents an opportunity to tell you what *they* want *you* to know. Keep the questionnaire as short as possible. Make certain that the data you collect can be applied to specific programs.

8. *Determine the research mechanism to be used—mail survey, telephone survey, self-administered questionnaire, or personal interviews—assign responsibility, and provide the required resources.* (See p. 39 for the pros and cons of various survey techniques.)

9. *Full steam ahead!*

Facing an enrollment decline

A decade ago, the University of Mississippi unexpectedly lost enrollment. This was well before the trend affected most institutions. Chancellor Porter L. Fortune, Jr., responded by appointing the Committee on Recruitment and Retention. It was composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The committee was to review institutional programs and to make recommendations directly to the chancellor.

Since its appointment in 1969, the committee has met for sustained periods of time each year—a half a day a week for as long as four months. During this time, it reviews virtually every aspect of the university that has, or could have, an effect on recruitment and retention. The chancellor always acts on the committee's twice yearly reports and he makes it clear that the committee's work is of the highest priority. This priority is reflected in the high proportion of the committee's recommendations the chancellor accepts. One midyear report is typical: of 34 recommendations, Dr. Fortune accepted 32.

Commitment to research

The Ole Miss Committee on Recruitment and Retention made an initial commitment to continuing research and to the development of a research-based marketing plan. Now many cite our program as a pioneering effort and as one of the most extensive—and effective—programs of its kind in the nation.

Every three or four years Ole Miss studies attitudes held by high school students, their parents, high school counselors, community college students, and alumni. We survey current-

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ly enrolled students each spring and faculty members somewhat less frequently. We have used both mail and telephone surveys.

Initially, an outside agency working under the direction of the Committee on Recruitment and Retention conducted our research. Subsequently, the Department of Public Relations assumed responsibility for research, which is conducted by the Department of Marketing of the School of Business Administration in cooperation with PR staff members. Graduate students in both marketing and journalism-public relations collect data that are tabulated by computer. The professional staff of the Admissions Office assists with the research to assure that it is finely tuned to support recruitment and retention.

We present a summary of research findings first to the chancellor and then to administrative, faculty, and student groups. Analysis of the data by the Department of Public Relations, the Department of Marketing, and an outside consultant results in recommendations for strategies that we use in the following year's marketing program.

The outside consultant is essential. Although the university conducts all of the research, an outside educational consultant guides the survey and evaluates the data. This other view, we feel, is valuable in balancing the inherent tendency of any institution to view itself from a narrow perspective. The Recruitment and Retention Committee and the chancellor consider reports by the university's research team and by the outside consultant before they make or act on recommendations.

Survey methods

We find mail surveys the most effective in terms of cost and in terms of the amount of information we can obtain. Mail surveys allow us to control costs by using the campus print shop and student labor. Telephone surveys, which can be conducted more quickly, often provide only surface information. Personal interview surveys are prohibitively expensive.

During 1981, the university surveyed high school students, community college sophomores and their parents, all Mississippi high school counselors, currently enrolled students, and nonreturning students.

In surveying the outside groups, we asked respondents to evaluate some 35 statements representing their "ideal" institution. Subsequently, we asked respondents to evaluate and rank Ole Miss and other area institutions according to these ideals.

The results gave us a clear view of what parents, prospective students, and counselors look for in the ideal institution as well as how these important publics see Ole Miss as compared with other institutions.

We asked our students to evaluate everything from student housing to academic advising programs. We also gave students an opportunity to tell, in their own words, what they liked best about the university and what they disliked most. (A word of caution: the latter open-ended question can be explosive. For example, Ole Miss students wrote in the names of two individuals as being "most disliked." Our top administrators found that these individuals, both of who were in high student contact areas, had real difficulty in relating to students. One is no longer at Ole Miss; the other now works in a new position that involves little student contact.)

Translating research into action

The university has always had a superb recruiting staff. But the information obtained from research has added many benefits. Market research has enabled Ole Miss to position itself in response to the interests and needs of parents, students, and counselors. We have used this information to transform our recruitment materials. For example, in 1974 we began to place much more emphasis on the availability of financial aid. This counteracted the image of Ole Miss as a high-cost institution.

This year's research indicates a marked change in the attitudes of students, parents, and counselors. While academic quality continues to be a top priority in selecting a college or university, career counseling and placement are now equal priorities. Studies of our students' attitudes follow this trend.

In response to these data, the university adopted a new theme, "We're Serious About Your Education, Serious About Your Success." Ole Miss put more money into the University Scholars program and made stronger commitments to the Career Counseling Center and placement activities.

We also evaluated and revamped the entire Ole Miss publications program to emphasize career counseling and placement as well as academic strengths. Our editors and designers developed publications with more specific information and with a more conservative look—less flash and color. We will use this career orientation in all institutional programs for three years or until our research indicates that we should change.

Internal studies have increased our awareness of student needs. These range from a strong career counseling program to clothes dryers and washing machines that work. We think we're right in assuming that our responsiveness to these concerns, as voiced through surveys, has helped to improve retention at the university.

The combination of internal and external research has frequently identified communications gaps. For example, when we found we were not communicating well with minorities, we developed publications edited with the help of minority students and designed specifically for minority audiences.

A few years ago when we began to see a growing interest in career preparation, we brought out career fact sheets on each academic program detailing academic requirements, job opportunities, and future projections. These went to counselors on and off the campus. Ole Miss also added career guidance and exploration courses to the curriculum and began sponsoring short courses on resume writing and job search methods each semester.

The News Service also distributes articles that emphasize the career orientation of the university and explain our placement programs and academic offerings to the print media. Alumni publications, speeches by administrators, displays and exhibits, and other public activities follow the same theme.

Using the computer

Because recruitment is such a complex process, we turned to the computer for help. Our computer inquiry control system gives Ole Miss managers the opportunity to control the flow of materials, to ensure prompt and effec-

tive responses by appropriate persons, and to monitor results.

The inquiry control system provides key contact offices with updated lists used for mailings, telephone calls, and alumni contacts. The system allows the university to communicate effectively throughout the year with the prospective student, the student's parents, and counselors until, we hope, the student joins the university family as a freshman. The computer system has greatly improved recruitment by coordinating our communications efforts.

Enrichment through research

The best measure of good market research is whether the facts collected can be applied for results. We say unequivocally that they can. Through research we have developed better communications to key publics, cost-effective publications and other communications programs that increase Ole Miss's appeal to prospective students, and other programs that improve our service to students.

Through research, we've unfogged the windows of our institutional vehicle. Now we're driving down the highway with a clear view of where we've been and where we're going in recruitment and retention. cnse

Marketing Study Tips

by A. Philip Zimmer

There is no such thing as a quick and easy marketing study. It takes time and energy to design one that meets your institution's specific needs.

Here are some tips on how to conduct a successful study. They are based on my experience in surveying community views of the SUNY College at Fredonia and in conducting a freshman marketing study there.

Define the purpose and put it in writing. That may sound laughable to the uninitiated, but it will keep the study on target. It's advisable to work up a concise needs list based on what your office and others want to learn from the study. That should ensure that the resulting information will be widely used. It will also mean that your institution will get the best return from the investment that it makes.

Get others involved. Make the study useful to as many people as possible. Listen and take suggestions, but maintain control and keep the purpose in mind. Definitely enlist the services of a statistician, preferably an on-campus person with prior survey work. He or she will prove helpful, especially for assistance in drawing the sample and analyzing the data.

Resist the temptation simply to lift questions from previous marketing studies. Remember, the study must reflect the specific needs of *your* institution at *this* time.

Draft the questionnaire and compare it to the needs list. Ask yourself precisely how you or others will use the information from each question. If you can't quickly figure out the purpose for a question, drop it. For assistance in wording the questions, refer to Stanley Payne's *The Art of Asking Questions.*

Conduct a trial run with at least eight to 10 individuals similar to those earmarked for your study. Rework or eliminate any vague or misleading questions. Shortcuts will only lead to headaches later.

Establish the survey methods early in the process. Personal interviews are an ideal method for obtaining marketing information—if your budget can handle the cost of hiring interviewers and if your study area is nearby. If your needs list has been kept to a bare minimum, you may choose a telephone survey. It's fast, relatively inexpensive, and easily supervised. Mailing questionnaires is a possibility if you take the steps necessary to get a 50 percent response rate, the minimum needed for valid results.

The survey's purpose should help you select the method. One New York State college recently attempted, through a mail questionnaire, to find out why students dropped out. The study netted a response rate of only 31 percent, in part because the former students had little motivation for responding. A telephone survey using the institution's WATS line would have proven more effective.

Be sure that you select a truly random sample of your target public so that the opinions you get will represent the whole group. In a random sample, every individual has an equal chance to be chosen. Your statistician can tell you how to go about this.

Keep in mind the importance of timing. When the Kansas State College at Pittsburg produced an extremely well-designed study to survey four general markets, it drew only a 20 percent response rate from community college students. This was because it reached them during the last week of the academic year.

Precode the questionnaire for easy tabulation. Check and double-check to ensure that the data can be easily plugged into existing computer programs. That will save you from back-breaking statistical tabulations.

Once the results are in, consult your statistician and then lay out a marketing program based on the study. Again, keep it short and to the point. Remember that people don't like to wade through a sea of statistics to get to your conclusions. cnse

A. Philip Zimmer, formerly director of news services, SUNY College at Brockport, is now director of communications at the Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, New York.

Guidelines for a Mail Survey

by Cletis Pride

1. Decide what specific problems you are trying to solve. Decide if a survey is the best road to a solution.

2. State—in writing—the objectives of your survey.

3. Decide which group(s) the survey should cover (your universe).

4. Decide on the size of your sample. (a) Remember that sample size does not increase proportionately to the size of the universe. If your universe is 200 people, you'll need 105 responses. If the universe is 100,000 people, you'll need 220 responses. Even with a much larger universe, you will not need many more responses. (b) Remember that a 50 percent response rate is good in a mail survey, so plan a sample at least twice as big as the size of the response you'll need. But you must get at least the 50 percent return to have confidence in the results.

5. Draw your sample, using a random method.

6. Construct your questionnaire. (a) Be brief. (b) Be specific. (c) Pay particular attention to clarity. (d) Use structured (multiple choice) rather than open-ended questions wherever possible.

7. Pretest your questionnaire. Have friends, colleagues, and some representatives of your universe complete the form and suggest improvements.

8. Mail questionnaire. (a) Remember that researchers have found that the more you spend for postage, the greater the response you will receive. First class (particularly with a commemorative stamp) brings greater results than third; even special delivery pays off. (b) Include a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a letter explaining the importance of participation.

9. Mail reminder postcard three or four days after questionnaire.

10. Second mailing of questionnaire (either to non-responders or to entire sample) should come two to three weeks after first mailing. Again enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope and a letter explaining the reason for mailing.

11. Tabulate and analyze returns (computer cross-sort helps here).

12. Most important: Apply what you've learned from your survey. **CASE**

Cletis Pride, formerly assistant secretary of the National Geographic Society, is now vice president.

Ending the "Rip-Off"

by M. Fredric Volkmann

What started as a perfect spring day in 1970 ended by changing my whole approach to recruitment publications.

The photographer and I had spent all afternoon taking campus shots for next year's Albion College catalog. After supper, when we returned for some sunset pictures, we noticed a crowd of students massing near the main dining hall.

Inside we found 600 students protesting a housing issue. As I moved unobtrusively to the back of the room, I was confronted by a burly student.

"Who are you—an administrator? What kind? Publications, uh, like the catalog, man?" He poked my chest with his finger and said belligerently, "You ripped me off, man."

A look of incredulity crossed my face, and a bruise developed on my heretofore unscathed sternum.

During the next few minutes I learned that the student had indeed been "ripped off" and that ultimately I was responsible. That was the beginning of my belief in the need for feedback, market studies, and publications that tell the truth, not in *adult* terms but in *student* terms.

This 1970 episode led to a complete revamping of Albion admissions materials. The total process took three years. The results: the college has had a full freshman class each year for five years while adding no new admissions personnel and while spending proportionately the same on recruitment publications as in 1968.

A bright, aggressive look has characterized all admissions materials since 1971. Copy, often written by student interns, is clear and direct. Our new materials receive high approval from students; up to 95 percent liked our new catalog covers, for example.

Back in 1970, we found the finger-poker's attitude to be widespread. Nine of 10 students we polled disliked what we thought were beautiful covers.

They called most of our photos "posed," "too building-oriented," "unrealistic." Their comments on copy in admissions material ranged from "Who says so?" to "Who cares?"

What research told us

We gathered information on student views in three ways. We started out by asking current and prospective students for their evaluation of all admissions publications. We got their responses to specific layouts, photographs, and copy. And at the same time the college's Bureau of Institutional Research tested general student attitudes.

We found that we could afford extensive research only by using students on the federal work-study program. These students designed and wrote the questions, gathered the data, and later interpreted the responses.

We used open-ended questions on the attitudinal surveys, and we stressed a "let it all hang out" approach in feedback studies.

M. Fredric Volkmann, formerly director of information services at Albion College in Albion, Michigan, is now associate vice chancellor and director of public relations at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

This letter was sent to 300 randomly selected students each year beginning in 1971. We received about 50 to 65 responses each year. Although deficient in strict statistical terms, we found this level of response provided data that led us to sound decisions. Here is the letter:

Dear Student: As a member of the Albion College community, you probably have arrived at opinions regarding the school. This office is interested in your attitudes for possible future use in student recruitment publications. Please study these questions carefully and give thoughtful, critical answers to each.

1. How do you feel about the school's experiences you have had here? Please explain.

2. What is your opinion of the school's student activities outside of the classroom? Be specific.

3. What, in your opinion, is this school's finest attribute? Its greatest shortcoming? Please explain.

4. Would you recommend Albion to prospective students? What would you warn them or encourage them about? Why or why not?

5. Did Albion misrepresent itself to you prior to your enrollment here? Please elaborate, giving any names, circumstances, and sources.

6. Your full name: _____

_____

Please keep my response confidential.

Hometown _____

Year _____

Please use the opposite side of this letter to reply to the questions. Return in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by the _____ deadline.

The work-study students analyzed the contents of the students' answers. All responses were gauged on a scale of one (extremely negative) to five (extremely positive). The answers were broken down according to the college class and sex of the respondent.

We were not too surprised to find students were very positive about academic experiences, lukewarm to negative about social life, and cautious about recommending Albion to others.

During the first year we found that many students felt Albion had been misrepresented to them. Some of this misunderstanding had been caused by publications, but most resulted from conversations prospective students had had with people (alumni, school counselors, coaches) before they enrolled. Many alumni had, for example, referred to Albion as the "Harvard of the Midwest"—an overstatement that could be translated by adults but not necessarily by impressionable high school seniors.

We checked to see how often particular comments were made. Those that were made frequently—say by more than 20 percent of the respondents—were quoted directly in the viewbook or paraphrased in publications.

We included several negative statements. The catalog actually said, "Albion will not tell you it is the 'Harvard of the Midwest,' " and then went on to describe the college's strong academic program and the advantages of its relative smallness.

Readership feedback

Needless to say, our next year's publications were considerably more conversational, frank, and candid. The graphics changed, too, as we pretested artwork and photos before publication.

To see how well these new publications were received, we randomly selected 50 current students and 50 prospective students to evaluate the materials. We mailed a letter, the publications, and a postage-paid reply envelope to these students.

They were asked to rate each photo and illustration on the same scale of one (poor) to five (excellent). They were also asked to evaluate sections of copy.

Work-study students again analyzed the responses. We killed many photos that received poor ratings. The result was more emphasis on "people pictures." By the end of the second year, our materials received highly positive responses, and we did not need to make many major copy or layout changes.

Don't stop with testing

Get out of your office. Go to college nights. Accompany the admissions staff on the road and talk to high school students, their parents, teachers, and counselors. Few journalists would write a news story without going out to get the facts, but how many of us write viewbooks and catalogs without interviewing 17-year-olds?

It is also vital that you become totally acquainted with the admissions office. Learn every system, form, reply card, booklet, letter, and poster it uses. When things don't seem to make sense, ask why. Today's admissions person uses far more sophisticated techniques than a few years ago—techniques that require the support of good writing, editing, and design.

Familiarize yourself with all of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) and American College Testing (ACT) data available on high school and college students.

Find out if your institution has conducted any formal market studies. Albion was fortunate in that a trustee gave $30,000 for an institutional market study that was conducted in 1971-72. It showed, among other things, that 75 percent of the students chose Albion by themselves, not because of the urging of parents or guidance counselors. They picked the school for three main reasons: academic reputation, opportunity to know faculty, and small size.

Determine everything you can from financial aid data regarding the general economic range of students enrolled. Discover how much influence parents had on the enrollment of your students and their finances.

Find out how many inquiries admissions gets each year. Ask counselors to keep track of which publications or events draw the most reply cards and requests for information.

If your school has enrollment goals projected for the next five to 10 years, do you know what they are? Do you know the number of applicants for admission? How many of them were admitted? What percentage of those actually came? Why or why not?

Meet with student leaders on campus. Pick their brains and listen to their answers. They won't con you, despite their naivete about communications theories, budgets, or administrative policies.

Has your designer been out to talk with faculty and students? It isn't pos-

sible to reflect your institution accurately without bringing your visual expert into contact with students, high school seniors, and the admissions staff.

Remember your goals

Your objective is to attract new students. To communicate with them, you have to use words, pictures, colors, and artwork that speak to their generation. Beware of pleasing your own personal tastes—or those of the president, the provost, or the alumni director. Do be sure that the admissions office is on your side as you face campus battles.

Oh, yes. Back to the crowded dining hall of 1970 and my finger-poking assailant. Why did he feel "ripped off"? Because I had said the student-faculty ratio was, say, 14-1. He (and, I later found, many other students) thought the ratio referred to class size. When he discovered that the average was 22 students per class, and that some freshman lectures had 250 students, he was justifiably upset.

Needless to say, we quickly replaced the student-faculty ratio figure with a frank statement about class size. **cnse**

Are You Communicating?

Without research, you'll never know
by Walter K. Lindenmann

Market research is the essential first step toward improving communications for student recruitment.

The reason is obvious. If you don't know your market—the prospective students—how can you talk to them in language they will understand?

Are you sure that you're communicating through your attractive student viewbooks and recruitment ads? Or could it be that you are talking only to yourself? Without research, you cannot be certain.

Unfortunately, when someone suggests doing market research, the response is, too often, that it is very expensive, very sophisticated, or very involved. While it is true that market research can be both costly and complex, that doesn't have to be the case.

At Hofstra University, we wanted answers. With good planning, student help, and very little expense, we produced and administered a survey that answered our questions. The results will surely benefit both the admissions and public relations departments at Hofstra. And we discovered how best to communicate with our audience.

We wanted to know how effective our undergraduate recruitment efforts had been. In particular, we wanted to know whether anyone noticed our print advertisements in daily, weekly, and high school newspapers; whether anyone heard our radio commercials; and which of our brochures, pamphlets, and booklets were being read.

We wanted to know to whom students turned most often for advice about college: high school guidance counselors, our own college admissions counselors, or their friends and family members. In short, we wanted an assessment, from the students we were trying to reach, of all our recruitment techniques and strategies.

Before we began

In conducting on-campus market research among entering students, we suggest the following basic rules.

1. Involve students in all phases of the project, especially in the wording of the questionnaire.

2. *Always* pretest your questionnaire on a small number of students.

3. If your survey findings are to be tabulated by computer, touch base with the director of your college computer facility *before* you finalize the survey instrument. They may suggest changes in the format of the questionnaire to make it easier for you, and for them, to code and tabulate.

4. If you expect a large response to your survey, include as many closed, multiple-choice questions as possible. Open-end questions (those that require the respondent to write out answers) are difficult and time-consuming to tabulate.

5. Be sure to obtain background or demographic information (male or female, resident or commuter, full-time or part-time, etc.) about the students you are surveying.

6. Always assure the respondents of complete anonymity. You probably will get a better response rate, as well as greater reliability and validity.

Hofstra's survey

We followed the rules. But we needed some answers fast, so we decided to go after a captive audience—our own entering freshmen and transfer students, who had just gone through the recruitment process. Although we recognized that they were a somewhat biased audience—they had obviously selected Hofstra over other institutions—we felt it was important to know which of our recruitment techniques had worked with them and which had fallen short. Hofstra administered the survey to them during our two-day summer orientation session.

Our survey instrument contained 25 separate questions, most of them of the closed, multiple-choice variety. It is a simple questionnaire to administer, and also an easy and inexpensive one to code and tabulate.

We distributed the questionnaire as part of a packet of materials to nearly 1,000 students participating in the orientation program. They were told that it would take about 15 minutes to complete and were asked to return the forms at the end of the orientation period.

To gain the confidence of the entering students and to assure them that filling out this questionnaire was not just one more demand of the university's administration, we developed our questionnaire with the help of current Hofstra students. We put one student in charge of the entire project.

The student director prepared a letter to the new students in which she solicited their help in filling out the questionnaire. She explained, as from one student to another, the importance of the information, and apologized for asking the students to

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complete yet another questionnaire.

Students were neither required to participate, nor were they given any special time to fill out the questionnaire. If they wanted to do it, they had to do it on their own time. The two-day orientation period is so packed with tests, briefings, counseling sessions, and faculty meetings with new students that we did not think it would be fair to impose still another required questionnaire.

We hoped to avoid forced, given-under-pressure replies from our students. We wanted them to have complete freedom of choice in responding. Even with volunteer participation, better than one-third of the eligible students filled out and returned the questionnaires.

Even the best self-administered questionnaire has its limitations. It can only collect responses to the specific questions asked. There is no room for the candid, unsolicited response. And so, in addition to distributing printed questionnaires to all, we conducted personal, open-ended interviews with some of the students.

Student interviewers conducted more than 60 interviews. The findings from the personal interviews added an extra dimension to our research.

Once the returns were in, student aides coded the questionnaires in the Office of University Relations, and tabulated them with the help of the university's computer center. The entire research project, which took about two months from start to finish, cost approximately $100, including computer time and printing the questionnaire.

In this project, we showed that market research need not be expensive and complex, and we gained valuable information about our recruitment program. CASE

Comparing Face-to-Face, Mail, and Telephone Surveys

Face-to-Face	Mail	Telephone
Advantages		
High response rate	Low cost	Low cost
Item nonresponse very low	Can reach widely dispersed population	Clarification possible
Clarification possible	Best on reducing bias due to social desirability	Can reach widely dispersed population
Sample most easily located	Respondent can answer at leisure	Good control over selection of respondent
Lengthy interviews possible	Sample easily located	High response rates
Visual aids can be used	High response rates for homogeneous groups	Avoid bias from refusals
Modern sensitivity to substitution	Moderate questionnaire length and question complexity possible	Good success with open-ended and screen questions
Best for elite populations	No interviewer distortion	Low item nonresponse
Possible to ask complex questions		Speed of implementation is best
Open-ended questions workable		Possibility of consultation is low
Screen questions effective		Moderately effective with elite populations
Sequence of questions can be controlled		
Good control over selection of respondent		
Possibility of consultation is low		
Disadvantages		
Most expensive	Least effective on elite populations	Limits to interview length (5-10 minutes)
Difficult to control and supervise interviewers in field	Lowest response rates; consultation difficult to control	Limits to question complexity
Socially desirable answers most likely	High item nonresponse; control over respondent selection limited	Sometimes difficult to locate adequate sample
Greatest possibility of interviewer bias	Takes long time to complete	Moderate avoidance of interviewer bias
Difficult to secure qualified personnel	Open-ended questions without probes difficult	
Longest in terms of implementation	Certain segments of population not approachable (such as illiterates)	

Sources: Some material in this table has been adapted from Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design and Method,* New York: Wiley, 1978, and from J. L. Simon, *Basic Research Methods in Social Science: The Art of Empirical Investigation,* New York: Random House, 1978.

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Section 3

New Markets: Recruiting Adults and Others

Good-bye Security Blanket

Base your institution's marketing plan on today's–and tomorrow's–reality

by Kenneth E. Young

We're all familiar with at least one child who, like Linus, became attached to a security blanket. The child carried it around until it was nothing more than a handful of threads, but in his or her mind it was still a blanket—and a source of comfort.

Like this child, many college leaders cling to threadbare mental pictures of their institutions, images that are no longer accurate. These leaders make speeches and produce articles that describe these nonexistent institutions. And—most dangerous—they make policy and develop marketing plans based on these unrealistic notions.

If this behavior seems strange, history reminds us otherwise. In the early 1900s, the heads of the great railroads persisted in thinking that their business was running trains rather than moving people and goods. And within the last 20 years, the decision makers in the automobile industry continued responding to the public's previous desire for speed, power, and social status rather than meeting its current need for economical, dependable transportation.

Perhaps you, too, are clinging to an outmoded model of your institution. This simple true-false test will help you find out.

1. Colleges and universities offer most of the postsecondary education in the United States.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

2. Colleges have what amounts to a monopoly on the awarding of academic credits and degrees.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

3. Most educational activity at colleges and universities is in the form of courses offered for academic credit leading to degrees.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

4. There are more full-time than part-time students in most colleges.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

5. There are more 18- to 24-year-olds than older students in most colleges.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

6. Colleges are at the forefront in developing and using the new technologies in education.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

7. Most colleges will still be around in the year 2000.

☐ **True** ☐ **False**

If you answered "true" to most of these questions, you are like the child with the threadbare blanket. If you said that any of the first six questions were true, you're wrong. We won't know the answer to the last question for another 17 years, of course, but don't place any bets on the outcome.

What are the facts?

1. *Colleges are the source of only a relatively small portion of the staggering amount of postsecondary education.* Let's take a closer look at the structured learning that occurs in the United States for persons beyond high school age:

- Federal agencies spend $19 billion a year on education and training, most of it conducted in-house or contracted to commercial firms. State and local governments spend even more.
- Corporations pour an estimated $30 billion a year in direct and indirect costs into education and training.
- Museums, libraries, galleries, theaters, foundations, and service organizations involve many thousands of people and untold dollars in educational programs.
- Most trade and professional associations responding to a recent survey listed education as their No. 1 activity.

2. *Noncollegiate enterprises increasingly are awarding credits and degrees.* Here are some noteworthy examples.

- The Community College of the Air Force, a computer-based academic credit bank at Maxwell Air Force Base tied to service schools throughout the world, advertises itself as the largest accredited degree-granting institution in the country.
- Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York awards M.D. and Ph.D. degrees.
- The General Motors Institute, the Rand Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, and the Arthur D. Little Management Education Institute are all accredited, degree-granting institutions. The Wang Institute is currently awaiting accreditation.
- The McDonald's Corporation has announced plans to offer an A.A. degree through its Hamburger University.

Learning experiences in the military and business can be translated into credit through the American Council on Education's Office on Educational Credit and Credentials; the College-Level Examination Program of College Board; and by institutions themselves following the guidelines of the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning.

3. *Noncredit learning is the most rapidly growing educational component in colleges.* Conferences, institutes, workshops, alumni colleges, summer vacation programs, study-travel tours, and a host of other special activities are now features of many campuses. More and more colleges are entering into contracts with nearby corporations or government agencies to offer special training programs.

Many noncredit courses are at very advanced levels of education. Harvard University, for example, serves about 45,000 part-time adult students each year—most of them doctors, lawyers, business executives, and educators learning the latest developments in their fields.

4. *Part-time students, most of them beyond 24 years of age, already have become the dominant group in all but a small number of institutions of higher education.* The National Center for Education Statistics reports that part-time students account for 41.7 percent of this year's total enrollments. They have increased at an average rate of 4.9 percent a year over the past seven years, while the average increase for full-time students has been 2.3 percent—and those figures are just for reported credit enrollments. They do not include noncredit programs.

5. *Adults between the ages of 35*

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and 44 are the fastest growing age group in the United States. This adult group will increase by 30 percent between 1980 and 1990, while the number of 18- to 24-year-olds will decline by 16 percent in the same period. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that most college students are over 21 years old, and 36 percent are 25 and over. Again, these figures represent credit enrollments only; large numbers of adults are also served in noncredit programs.

6. *Colleges and universities lag behind in the adoption of new technology.* At a recent meeting, John Jenness, director of human resources planning and development at Consolidated Edison Company, claimed that the military services are 20 years ahead of education and that business and industry are 10 years ahead of education in making effective use of new technology for learning. None of the educators in the room disagreed with that statement.

Here and there a few colleges are experimenting with a variety of new ideas, but limited funds and perspectives have prevented a broad-gauged approach to using technology in higher education. Few leaders in higher education seem to have recognized the potential for the truly individualized instruction made possible by combining the telephone, the copier, the computer, and the television set into a single, integrated electronic system. These educators don't realize the potential for the use of satellites to link up professors, students, libraries, and data bases wherever they happen to be.

Looking ahead

Conditions for colleges are not going to get any better, let alone go back to the "good old days." The future likely will bring:

- *A steady decline in the number of 18- to 24-year-old students.* Furthermore, that smaller group of potential undergraduates is going to be not only part of a buyer's market—and thus choosy about which institutions they attend—but also members of the "Atari generation," more at home with technology than their professors are. Both of these developments pose new problems for traditional institutions.
- *Increasing competition for high school graduates, particularly the "best" ones.* (The military services will be among the most aggressive competitors.)
- *More competition in the educational marketplace from business and industry.* Corporations will develop new technological tools and software for their own purposes of employee training and then decide to market these tools to a broad segment of society.
- *A growing tendency for all social institutions to develop their own education and training activities.* We are truly becoming "a learning society," as Torsten Husen terms it in his book of that title.
- *Continued financial problems.* These problems will be worsened by small or nonexistent increases in direct government funding and a lessened but ever-present inflation factor.
- *A gradual change in public attitudes.* This change will reflect a continued faith in the importance of education, particularly as the major social instrument for achieving socioeconomic mobility. But it will also mirror a greater skepticism about the value (versus the cost) of a college education compared to alternative routes for self-improvement, career development, or other education-related goals.
- *A continuing increase in adult and part-time students.* As has already been indicated, these individuals represent a much greater diversity in backgrounds, skills, motivations, and needs. They therefore require different institutional responses.

What to do?

Given these forecasts, it is essential that every college and university place high priority on three actions:

1. *Self-study.* Every institution must come to terms with its present realities. "Know thyself" and "To thine own self be true" may be shopworn phrases, but they are still precepts well worth following. It is shocking, in this day and age, that many colleges do not have either an office of institutional research or a continuing process for tracking what is happening in the institution—its patterns of development, its successes and failures. Even more incomprehensible, very few colleges fully use the periodic self-study for accreditation as a tool for obtaining planning information for the institution.

2. *Planning.* Most colleges engage in planning. It used to be called "long-range planning" until institutions discovered that they couldn't effectively predict the future for more than two or three years. Now the popular term is "strategic planning." The facts of the matter, however, are that many colleges and universities:

- begin planning with unexamined, untested, and therefore unchanged assumptions about the nature and purpose of the institution;
- focus planning on enrollment projections, building needs, financial estimates, and traditional curriculum development; and
- do not use planning as an important marketing tool.

3. *Marketing.* Many college leaders, particularly faculty members, still wince at this word. They see it as meaning "selling" and therefore as an academic anathema. Marketing, however, simply means "the effective management by an organization of its exchange relations with its various markets and publics" (Philip Kotler).

Very few colleges are engaging in a systematic process of marketing. Those that have tried often have fallen into the mental trap that caught the railroads and the automobile industry. They have been insensitive to the realities of their marketplaces.

You probably are familiar with that simple psychological test that asks you to connect three rows of three dots each, using four straight lines without lifting the pen from the paper. It cannot be done unless you go *beyond* the boundaries of the dots. But most people automatically accept that limitation on their thinking and struggle with a self-imposed, insoluble problem. Once you expand your mental picture, the solution becomes easy to find.

Similarly, in order to market a college, you have to ask and answer the following kinds of questions:

- Who are our markets (student clienteles)—present and potential? How are they changing?
- Which of these clienteles are we reaching and not reaching, and why?
- Who is our competition for these various student clienteles?
- How can we position ourselves in the marketplace to make maximum use of our institutional strengths, in relation to our competition, in order to reach and serve those students most likely to be interested in and to profit from our services?

More and more colleges are adopting marketing strategies. The great

danger, however, is that many of them may be marketing something of a myth and focusing on a limited, and diminishing, market. Are your catalogs, news releases, and fund-raising materials talking about young people spending four idyllic years at Old Ivy?

Bringing about change

Everyone at an educational institution, of course, has a stake in its survival and success. However, more than anyone else, you CASE members—directors of public relations, publications, development, and alumni relations—are going to live or die professionally depending on your ability to help your institutions come to terms with present realities and future probabilities.

If your college is not engaging in self-study, planning, and marketing, then you need to be concerned. You and your colleagues must find ways to: (1) get the attention of a busy, preoccupied president; (2) convince him or her, with data, that the college and its role in society are changing in important ways; and (3) work with the president to shape a strategy for moving an almost-always resistant faculty into a different set of perceptions about the institution and their roles in it. These are not easy things to do, but the alternative may be decline and, in some instances, demise.

Many colleges are not going to change or change enough or change soon enough or change in the right ways. Some of these—for example, fundamentalist church colleges—will continue to thrive because they have a special set of circumstances that will enable them to serve a particular limited market. Others—for example, some nonurban state colleges—will survive but lose strength and appeal. Still others will die or suffer grave wounds—and we may be surprised by the number and some of the names.

These will be the Penn Centrals, the Chryslers, and the Braniffs of higher education. Will your college be one of them? **CASE**

I Am Curious (Adult)

Building programs to attract adult students
by Peter S. Bryant

What do you do when you realize that your area of the country will soon experience a drastic drop-off in the number of high school students it graduates? For one thing, you expand enrollment of adult students. At least that's what we're doing at Kirkwood Community College.

Although Kirkwood is located in Cedar Rapids, a relatively rapid growth area (for Iowa), we expect a 20 to 25 percent decline in high school graduates by the mid-1980s. Meanwhile, competition for those students is keen.

Our state has 28 private four-year colleges, three state universities, 15 community colleges and vocational technical schools, plus a scattering of private two-year colleges and business schools. The University of Iowa is about 20 miles south of our campus, and we have three excellent private colleges in our district.

In spite of this competition, Kirkwood remains one of the fastest growing colleges in Iowa. Kirkwood began with 199 students in 1966. In the fall of 1980, we had approximately 5,000 students in credit programs and about 8,000 students in noncredit programs. The 1979-80 full-time equivalent enrollment was well over 6,500 in a district with approximately 330,000 people.

Nine years ago, our studies indicated that we had about 5,000 high school seniors and 167,000 adults in our district. Dozens of other institutions were interested in that same group of 5,000—of whom only half wanted to continue their education. This prompted us to ask why we were directing all our recruitment efforts and programming to attracting 5,000 students when the adult market was many times larger.

Focus on marketing

When, in 1971, we foresaw the college-age population drop, we made a commitment to an aggressive marketing program. We set out to maintain our share of the traditional market and to pursue aggressively the older student market for our vocational-technical and our arts and sciences programs.

That has produced major dividends: We have attracted hundreds of new students. In our last survey of students taking courses for credit, we learned that 42 percent of our students are over the age of 22; 29 percent are older than 25; almost 60 percent have worked one or more years before enrolling; and 40 percent have worked three or more years.

These are men and women in their 20s, 30s, 40s, and even 50s who are seeking a career change, who are at a point in their lives when they want to do something different, to have a new opportunity. People don't have to work in the same job forever if it is not appealing and challenging to them. We can benefit from this growing realization. We can provide guidance and direction through human potential courses, life-work planning seminars, and career decision-making sessions.

Innovative programming helps

Providing creative, flexible, responsive educational programming is a way to attract the older student. New educational delivery systems are an important ingredient, too. Involving your administrators and faculty in designing programs that meet the needs and interests of adult students is important to successful marketing.

I could cite many examples of innovative approaches: weekend colleges, special institutes and short courses, women's programs, cooperative arrangements with business and industry, and education for the labor force in cooperation with labor unions.

At Kirkwood, our efforts to attract

Peter Bryant, formerly associate superintendent for community relations at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is now vice president, college advancement, and dean of admissions at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa.

the older student into vocational-technical and arts and sciences programs have been fruitful. In the transfer programs, about two-thirds of our 2,500 students are older, part-time students.

We have accomplished this through several programs:

1. *2-3-2*—a part-time package enabling people to obtain *two* years of college in *three* years by taking *two* classes each quarter.

2. *Wednesday College*—block scheduling of classes so that it is possible for some students to take two classes on Wednesday and not have to be on campus another day of the week. Many women re-entry students take advantage of Wednesday College.

3. *Off-campus Degree*—a program allowing people throughout Kirkwood's seven-county area to stay in, or near, their own community and earn a two-year associate degree in selected areas of business, liberal arts, criminal justice, or agriculture.

4. *Interactive Television*—a two-way live color television system linking students and teachers in different locations; people at all locations can see and interact with each other.

5. *Telenetwork*—an audio system employing the technology of the telephone (like a giant party line) to link students in outlying area classrooms with an on-campus classroom.

6. *TV Courses*—courses broadcast at convenient times over the Iowa Public Broadcasting Network. They offer a variety of supplemental materials, optional seminars, and at-home testing.

7. *Weekend College*—an opportunity for people to take on weekends a full academic load of three or four courses each quarter, or a part-time load in the arts and sciences.

8. *Part-time Vocational-Technical Option*—scheduling of classes required for completion of vocational-technical programs so that persons already employed can attend class part-time, during the evening hours.

9. *Self-paced Instruction*—modular instruction in courses such as math, accounting, typing, and foreign languages that allows students to proceed at their own pace.

Developing promotion strategies

Here are some of the marketing and promotion strategies we have developed:

- Have a year-long marketing plan with a budget. Each year, I prepare a budget allocation proposal by quarter and then follow up with a detailed promotion plan for each quarter. At least six weeks before registration, I use this in planning meetings with the deans.

The plan should include more than advertising. It should be a comprehensive communication program with target audiences, including a careful analysis of all media opportunities—newspapers, radio and TV, direct mail (tabloid, special mailings, posters, flyers, and so on), and exhibits and displays (in department stores and malls).

- Package your promotion around:

1. *Opportunities.* Show what people can accomplish by enrolling—for example, a good career, increased earning power, success, self-satisfaction.

2. *Services.* Make enrolling and decision making easy by providing such services as phone-in registration, counseling, adult re-entry assistance sessions, and women's assistance sessions. These make good topics for PSAs and provide material for talk shows.

3. *Image.* Consider carefully the image you wish to project. All of your advertising and publicity should reflect the kind of institution you believe you are. Our publicity and advertising attempts to say that Kirkwood Community College is a place where futures begin for people of all backgrounds, ages, and interests; where the individual's needs are foremost; where faculty and staff really care about people and their success; where instructional approaches recognize individual differences; where quality faculty and programs are prevalent; and where progressive approaches make education accessible and enjoyable.

Obviously, knowing the image you wish to project externally can have good results internally. This provides your faculty and staff with a cohesive view of what your college aspires to be. Your institution must then be true to that image.

4. *Impact.* Obviously, most people who read about your college will not be motivated to enroll. But a community-based institution, whether public or private, needs public understanding and support. Your information should educate the public about your programs and services and your college's economic and social impact.

Look to business and industry

Older students, of course, are not waiting for you in the high school counselor's office. Because businesses and industries are primary sources of adult students, establishing cooperative programs through their management and personnel directors can be most productive. Some approaches you may consider in working with business and industry are:

- meeting with top management of selected industries to learn their educational needs;
- finding out whether they have educational tuition incentives for employees;
- having a part-time information coordinator within the company (assuming it is large enough);
- being willing to offer classes at the company at convenient times for employees;
- offering financial aid to part-time adult students; and
- involving business people in advisory roles.

Don't forget two-year grads

For four-year institutions, the students from two-year colleges represent a tremendous resource at the junior year—a time when attrition rises.

Yet what are we two- and four-year colleges doing to work together? Many of our cooperative activities could be in the best interest of our students and our community.

Here are some approaches to attracting the two-year transfer to a four-year institution.

1. Be highly visible regularly at the local two-year college.

2. Develop cooperative programs allowing for easy transfer. Have joint summer sessions. Offer joint art, music, dramatic, and other student activities. Accept some vocational-technical courses for credit (engineering, health, data processing, business, agriculture, or environmental health).

3. Produce information materials aimed at transfer students. Let them know they are welcome at your institution.

4. Develop financial aid packages for transfer students.

5. Involve your faculty. Faculty should develop good lines of communication between institutions. Two-

year faculty and staff, such as counselors, can be most helpful in encouraging students to attend four-year colleges.

6. Invite two-year students to a four-year campus for an orientation program. Make them feel wanted.

How to Proceed

If you're serious about expanding your market for adult students, here are nine steps to follow:

1. Determine what your "community" is. From what area can you attract adult students? Are there other colleges in the area? How can you work with them? Don't be threatened by nearby colleges. Join forces with them to develop programs, especially for the adult student.

2. Determine what the needs of that community are. Its economic and social character will determine the programs you offer.

3. Analyze what people want. In education, we have for years offered people what *we* think they want. It's time we offered them what *they* think they want and need.

4. Schedule courses at a time and place convenient for working people. Why should working adults, most of whom are taxpayers, be denied a college education simply because we are too inflexible to rearrange our schedules? These are the people who support public institutions. Faculty members need to be sensitive to this.

5. Offer education at the lowest possible cost. Keep in mind the income levels of the students to be served by the program.

6. Offer refresher and developmental courses. Test students to determine their skill levels and needs. Be concerned that they succeed at college.

7. Develop an active plan to minimize attrition—an early warning system, personal and career counseling, exit interviews, and invitations to return.

8. If possible, establish childcare, either independently or in cooperation with another facility.

9. Involve adults in the recruitment process. They can assist and reinforce others in orientation sessions. **cnse**

Down with Walls, Up with Malls

Taking classes to the shopping centers
by Noel H. Duerden

The time from idea to reality was only a month, and the program has proven itself in a year. It's Learn & Shop, a concept of offering university credit courses by university faculty in shopping centers.

The idea was conceived in December 1978 by James R. East, associate dean of liberal arts at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). By January 19, 1979, more than 500 adults were in classes in four department stores in four suburban Indianapolis shopping centers.

The program grew into a summer offering, then a fall program that attracted 1,000 students. One year later, in spring 1980, more than 1,300 students were attending classes in 10 stores in five shopping centers. By fall 1980, enrollment was almost 2,000.

People will go shopping regardless of the weather, inflation, or other external problems, says East. They also are always looking for convenient and simple ways to satisfy curiosity about themselves and their world.

Noel Duerden is director of publications and information services at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.

Two snowy winters in Indianapolis closed IUPUI on several occasions, but people still showed up at the malls.

IUPUI's administration was pleased with the bold idea but told East that there was not enough money to rent space. He surveyed the situation and approached a department store manager. The manager offered a well-equipped employee training room, free.

Soon store managers were almost standing in line to cooperate. One store wanted to offer Learn & Shop exclusively in its five locations. But to keep the program broad-based, East spread the wealth. The program retains its independence as a university project, keeping its image free from being regarded as a corporate enterprise.

Once we had made space arrangements, we had to get the word out. We worked out a promotional plan to make the city aware of Learn & Shop during the week between Christmas and New Year's. We mailed more than 90,000 flyers, placed ads in most community weeklies and dailies, and conducted a radio blitz. The news media responded well.

According to East, the post-Christmas news lull worked to the advantage of Learn & Shop. All four Indianapolis television stations trumpeted the program, and the daily newspapers put it on the front page. By registration time, almost all of the class seats had occupants.

To serve the students the first semester, we sold textbooks in the classroom on the first day. Since then, we have made arrangements with the campus bookstore to supply texts to commercial bookstores in each shopping center during the first two weeks of classes. We place reference books in public libraries near the shopping centers. And we conduct registration on-site; students need not visit the IUPUI campus.

The academic community has responded with enthusiasm. Some professors prefer to teach courses at the shopping centers rather than come to one of the five IUPUI locations in Indianapolis. That first semester, they taught 17 courses from nine departments, six days a week. A year later, they were teaching 61 classes from 22 departments seven days a week.

Who responds to this educational idea? Around 80 percent of the students are female; about 60 percent are between 22 and 40 years of age; and about 50 percent are married or

divorced. About 90 percent hold no college degree, which means that we have tapped and served a new clientele.

The reasons why students come are varied. Convenience is number one. Most people are looking for a new opportunity to expand themselves. East surveys students each semester. They have commented:

"Classes are closer to home; I save gas, and I don't have to leave work as early." "It's like having a major university near my home." "I'm not ready at this point to be part of the campus life or atmosphere." "It gives me the opportunity to shop before class."

IUPUI has a two-year associate degree program in liberal arts. The Learn & Shop curriculum permits individuals to earn that degree entirely at shopping centers. Students can apply those courses and others to various programs in the IUPUI curriculum.

East is waiting for the day that the first students complete all degree requirements. He's planning a mini-graduation ceremony on the mall of one of the centers.

The Learn & Shop idea has caught on with at least a dozen other universities nationwide. They have studied IUPUI's success and many have asked to use the materials we developed, including the Learn & Shop logo.

Comments East: "This certainly has proved that higher education is both needed and possible for the older generation. Adults are plagued with two problems when they consider further schooling: fear of competing with younger students and concern about taking the time for regular college programs.

"Universities traditionally have walled people in and out, figuratively and literally. What Learn & Shop has accomplished is to tear down some of those walls and bring faculty and courses to the people." **cnea**

Smoothing the Path

How to recruit two-year college graduates
by Diann Zeldman

When it comes to community college graduates, is your university turning the transfer process into an obstacle course? If so, I'd like to share some suggestions on how to change tactics and make transferring a short, smooth path for students to follow.

We've had plenty of experience because most of Florida International University's new students are two-year college graduates. Since our founding in 1972, we've been an upper-division institution offering junior and senior years of college plus graduate work.

My recruitment focus has been primarily on articulation efforts—that is, helping two-year college graduates make the transition to university life. The statewide "Articulation Agreement" between Florida's universities and community colleges ensures that the state's community college graduates with associate of arts degrees are admitted to the state universities. In addition, if a transfer student has completed the general education core at a community college, he or she is exempt from university general education requirements. FIU has also established transfer guidelines for associate of science degree graduates seeking admission.

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Local community college visits

During my visits to community colleges, my two priorities are wide visibility and distribution of factual program information. I arrange for a table to be set up in a high-traffic area and identify it by a banner with FIU's name and logo. Because I represent the local state university, I see a constant flow of students who seek quick, informative responses. They appreciate concise information about their intended majors.

My best handouts are one-page individual program sheets listing the required lower division preparation for a corresponding upper division program at FIU. Each sheet has the name, phone number, and office location of the departmental adviser. In addition, we have artistically designed program brochures that are eye-catchers for my table. But the one-page outline provides exactly what the local transfer student wants to know.

I usually take the initiative by informing students of deadline dates or program prerequisites. I am prepared for such common questions as "What are the job opportunities in this field?" and I believe the best responses are honest, factual, and preferably documented. The placement office should be able to provide you with up-to-date information on employment trends.

We schedule bimonthly visits to local community colleges, sending notices to the advising departments. University faculty, as well as representatives from such other areas as veterans' affairs or financial aid, are welcome to participate in these visits.

Recruiting without a representative

The community college advising office is generally the centralized area for transfer student information. The university articulation office produces and distributes counseling manuals to advisers at the 28 Florida community colleges. These manuals list the required and recommended lower division preparation for each academic major. The accurate information and easy-to-read style make them the "advisers' bible."

Racks with colorful brochures make information accessible to students. I also recommend leaving return address interest cards in the racks so that students can request catalogs or additional information.

Visits outside the area

Since 1974, the nine state universities in Florida have participated in an annual community college tour throughout the state. Traveling together has promoted a spirit of cooperation rather than competition among the institutions, and together we attract more students and publicity.

We spend the morning talking to prospective students about various

programs and requirements. In the afternoon, community college administrators and faculty meet with the representatives to establish personal rapport and to introduce new programs and changes. This coordinated approach has helped each state university's articulation office gain acceptance as the primary source for transfer student information.

Personal follow-up

Two professionals and a full-time secretary staff the articulation/recruitment office at FIU. Although the department is small, we reach a large audience with a personal touch. One of our most successful efforts is the Personalized Admission Service (PAS). This program complements our traditional admission system by offering on-the-spot evaluation at the local community college. Prospective students bring their completed applications, fees, and transcripts to the FIU representative. If admissible, the applicant will receive a provisional admission letter. This status is good for one quarter, but we require the student to send in a final transcript after completing courses at the community college.

Our system is fast, personal, and uncomplicated. (If your recruiters are not trained to evaluate transcripts or allowed to issue admission letters, you could offer the service through the admissions office.) The key is publicity. During the past years, I have tried posters, newspaper articles, and memos to advisers in order to publicize our visit. The most successful approach has been mailing letters directly to community college students who have completed 45 or more semester hours. After receiving address labels from the community college, we send letters announcing when and where PAS will be offered and what the student needs to bring to the session.

As a bonus, we provide free FIU T-shirts to students who participate. They are paid for by the FIU Student Government Association.

Once a new student is admitted, he or she appreciates the personal touch even more because it is unexpected. We hold an evening telephone campaign prior to registration. Our campaign works best when our faculty, staff, and student volunteers call new applicants to see if they have any questions. Even if there are none, the call provides a chance to welcome the student to the university.

Another effort with a personal approach is the Orientation and Registration Day for new students. These students have already had two years of college, so the session differs from a traditional freshman orientation. The most appropriate program is one that provides students the opportunity to register for classes, to talk with advisers, and to learn the university's procedures and services. You must hold these sessions at convenient times. We offer two sessions each quarter: one in the morning and one in the evening, each lasting approximately 90 minutes.

Reaching the community college graduate requires more than impressive brochures, snappy advertisements, and a dynamic recruiting team. It requires articulation efforts that will smooth the path for transfer students.

Marketing by Objectives

How to write a marketing plan and what to do with it once you've got it

by Diane McNutt

If you are an organization fanatic, as I am, you may have been writing marketing plans for years without realizing it. Only after the term "marketing" acquired some panache with educators did I learn that my careful outlines—the ones I prepared before the start of each continuing education program—were "marketing plans."

A marketing plan is a tool, not bureaucratic drudgery. It can be as detailed or brief as you like. Once you've caught on to its benefits, it can save you considerable time and effort.

When I was in San Jose State's continuing education department, I prepared a comprehensive marketing plan for the entire year. It listed our continuing education goals for past and future programs and divided our promotional budget among our major programs—including summer sessions, spring and fall extension, January session, travel study, and more.

I also prepared more detailed marketing plans prior to the start of each of these major programs. For instance, to promote one spring extension semester, we studied the courses scheduled, determined the strong and weak points, and presented an outline of action.

You can even develop marketing plans for more specific purposes, such as the promotion of a public lecture.

A caution

One word of warning before I outline the marketing plan checklist for you. When the subject of marketing plans came up at different meetings in the California State University and Colleges system, at least one person always rejected the concept immediately. He or she would say that his or her school had "no extra money for some fancy marketing plan."

My response was that money is not the issue here. The marketing plan allocates resources based on a set of goals and objectives. Whether your promotion budget is $100, $1,000, or $1 million, a marketing plan helps you use the available money and people power to best advantage.

A checklist

Here's a checklist of elements that should appear in every marketing plan.

1. *Objectives, both overall and specific.* The overall objectives need to be broad goals for your continuing education program and for this particular marketing publicity campaign. Often our overall objectives at San Jose State were "to increase visibility in the community" or "to increase enrollments."

Specific objectives give the hard facts—for example, to enroll 30 people in a course, attract 3,000 to an auditorium, increase by 10 percent our student credit hours, or show a 5 per-

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cent increase in annual income.

Too often, enthusiastic marketing or PR directors rush into a campaign without first establishing objectives. If you don't know what you're trying to accomplish, how do you know what strategy to take? And how do you know if you're successful?

2. *A market analysis.* What are the components of your continuing education program? What are the strong areas—those that are easy to promote and that attract the most students? What are the weak areas? How does this yearly program or individual course differ from past offerings? What is the competition?

3. *A list of potential markets.* Can the overall program be broken down into smaller, more marketable segments? Would it be better to promote it as a whole or in segments? Why would each potential market or audience be interested in the program?

4. *An ideal marketing plan for each market or audience.* In this plan, forget about budgetary and other resource limitations. If money and people power were no problem, what would you do to reach each of the markets and inform those potential students of this program? Which markets and programs are the "best bets"? Which would be costly to reach? How should your approach differ for each segment? What was done in the past that proved successful? Which media will be most effective?

The list of possible promotional activities is endless. Here are those used most frequently to promote continuing education:

- bulletins—one or many;
- direct mail—from traditional direct mail packages to self-mailing brochures to posters;
- paid advertising in newspapers or magazines, on radio or TV;
- public service announcements on radio or TV (supplied to stations as written scripts, tapes, or films);
- news coverage in newspapers, magazines, calendars of events, and on radio or TV;
- media events—news conferences, media parties, media kits;
- public affairs time on radio and TV;
- posters on public transit;
- billboards—painted or 30-sheet;
- personal contacts in business, industry, clubs, and organizations;
- exhibits and displays in shopping centers, fairs, and public libraries;
- telephone sales;
- gimmicks—buttons, T-shirts, balloons, and the like; and
- on-campus PR—special events, open house orientation meetings, etc.

5. *A modified plan that fits your needs and capabilities.* From your ideal design, modify your plan to take into account considerations of budget, staff availability, general feasibility, policy in continuing education and in the university, time limits, and all other possible constraints.

A personal warning here: At this step, I was famous for overlooking demands on staff time outside of my office. I remember well the time I placed a half-page ad in our local daily newspaper offering our bulletin free to interested persons who called and requested a copy. The five-person registration office received 458 calls the next day. We were unprepared, and, although we managed to get the bulletins out, it caused an uproar.

If you're going to do a mailing of 100,000 direct mail pieces and you get an average response of 3 percent, can you handle the requests for 3,000 bulletins? Will you have enough extra bulletins available? What if your direct mail campaign is extremely successful and pulls a 7 percent return, as one of ours once did? Can you handle 7,000 new potential students?

6. *An accurate timeline and budget for your revised plan.* Does it look as if your plan will work on paper? Is there room for flexibility in budgeting? Does the timeline allow for delays and crises?

Carrying out your plan

Having a carefully prepared plan, timeline, and budget at the start of the academic year will allow you to concentrate on producing the best quality marketing tools you can. All of the decision making has been done in an unrushed, rational manner. Now you simply follow your own guidelines.

1. *Have the plan approved by the dean or director of continuing education.* This is, of course, a "must."

2. *Thoroughly plan and describe each component in the marketing plan.* Will the components fit together under a theme? If these particular methods have been used before, can they be improved? What is each piece trying to accomplish? Have you built in some means for measuring your results?

3. *Do it.*

4. *Let others know what's going on.* Prepare a synopsis of the marketing plan to familiarize others in continuing education and throughout the university with what is going to happen.

5. *Monitor response.* Are materials sent out quickly and efficiently? Do the registration people have the answers to often-asked questions? Are enrollments coming in as you expected? Are there any last-minute, inexpensive efforts that can help weak areas?

If possible, review some materials yourself. Many times returned coupons or registration forms will contain comments or suggestions that never get seen by anyone but a student assistant, who may not recognize their value. Also, looking over the responses gives you an opportunity to see flaws or hazy phrasing in your materials that may be causing confusion.

6. *Do research on the responses and enrollments your campaign generated.* Which methods produced the most response? Which produced a higher percentage of enrollments? Do you feel any were particularly effective in increasing visibility or reinforcing a positive image in the community?

7. *Calculate cost effectiveness.* How much did each response cost? each enrollment? Can you calculate future benefits, such as repeat enrollments?

8. *Consider future research.* Should you send a questionnaire to all respondents asking why they did or did not enroll? Or should you prepare a survey of enrollments to help determine demographics, reasons for enrollment, or both? Should you check further on which media are most used by your student population? Do you have all the facts you need for next time?

9. *Evaluate the campaign.* How effective was the campaign in reaching set goals? Were other things accomplished? Have you learned anything useful you can apply to your next program? What problems occurred? What was too much work? What do you wish you had included? How would you improve the things you did?

Take advantage of this time to outline a plan of action for the next campaign while all of the details are still fresh in your mind. The second campaign you plot with this checklist should go even more smoothly than the first. Happy marketing! CASE

Staying Afloat

How to increase your school's applicant pool
by Patricia Cotsen

We've found a way to increase our applicant pool, project a good image of our school in the community, and reach new audiences. Our secret? A weekend program to enrich the education of non-Nichols School students.

The Nichols "Super Saturday" program attempts to show that quality teaching and small classes can challenge students and provide a lasting value for the financial investment required. We have designed our Saturday courses to project an image of a nonsexist, contemporary, exciting, democratic, quality school.

Each year, three five-week sessions provide 80 courses—science, language, art, and physical education. We give students, aged 8 through 18 years, flyers with lively course titles and descriptions ("Say Cheese" and "Mad Scientist" among them). We use advertisements, handbills, and public service announcements to supplement our direct mailing. This year's campaign brought in approximately 650 students. Some enrolled for more than one class so we had 860 course place enrollments.

For the past three years, we've built a special mailing list that has grown to a surprising size and composition. The Super Saturday program brings in the most names, but we've also made an effort to retain the names and addresses of non-Nichols children who have participated in other school activities. This year, we have a list of 2,000 nonaffiliated families of school-age children who are comfortable on the Nichols campus and familiar with the quality of a Nichols education. The admissions overtones are obvious. But what interests us is the way in which easily targeted areas of Buffalo's population have responded.

The number of middle-class minority children attending the Saturday program has increased without a concentrated effort on our part. A social worker connected with an inner-city neighborhood house, convinced of the value of the program, found agency funding to pay part of the tuition. She provided interested scholarship students to fill spaces in classes that were underenrolled. At the same time, the Super Saturday program arranged to send two student teachers to teach a Saturday course at a neighborhood house.

The geographic composition of the Super Saturday program is remarkable, with students coming from as far away as 35 miles. Nichols has had only a few students from some districts of the city, but the enrichment program has brought in more students from these areas. Although we no longer cross-check our applicants with the Super Saturday list, we know that the correlation was high in 1978-79, when 26 students from the Super Saturday program applied for admission.

Here are some of the lessons we've learned on how to attract outside youngsters to programs at your school.

1. *Direct mail is the best approach.* Retain the names of all people who call the school to request catalogs, attend movie showings, and so on. Gather mailing lists from Sunday schools, athletic groups, Scouts, and schools in your greater suburban areas. Try to add your flyers to a mailing from another constituency.

2. *Handouts help.* Request to have flyers sent home with children in local church, school, athletic, and social groups. Keep in mind that you must use extra effort to penetrate new target areas. Put flyers in shopping bags or have them delivered with weekly newspapers.

3. *Ads and news releases will reinforce your efforts.* Submit press releases to daily and weekly papers and send public service announcements to radio and television stations. Advertise in local papers; repeat at least three times.

With a little imagination and lots of effort, you, too, can have Super Saturdays. cnse

Patricia Cotsen, formerly director of community affairs at the Nichols School in Buffalo, New York, is now development coordinator at the Park School of Buffalo.

Section 4

The Personal Touch: Getting Closer to Your Prospects

Avoiding the Impersonal Touch

Why your PR staff needs to think personal when helping development and student recruitment clients
by M. Fredric Volkmann

Most of us carry out our overall public relations program using techniques such as news releases, press conferences, announcements, brochures, and pamphlets. We assume these will generate the results our clients seek.

Actually, such techniques aren't always the best ways to solve a communication or marketing problem. They ignore more personal strategies. Let's face it: People talking to people is what gets things accomplished.

Unfortunately, many top education managers equate "publish or perish" with success. For some, the written word becomes a panacea for all promotional problems. Yet we have many more successful ways of promoting and selling products, ideas, or services than "putting it in writing." Research shows that the following, in descending order of importance, are the most effective ways to communicate an institution's message:

1. one-to-one, face-to-face conversation;
2. a small-group discussion or meeting;
3. a person speaking before a large group;
4. a telephone conversation between two people;
5. a handwritten, personal note;
6. a typed, personal letter not generated by a computer;
7. a computer-generated "personal" letter;
8. a mass-produced, nonpersonal letter;
9. a brochure sent out as a direct mail piece;
10. an article in an institutional newsletter or magazine;
11. news carried in the mass media (newspapers, radio, television, magazines);
12. advertising in newspapers, radio, magazines, posters, etc.; or
13. other even less personal forms of communication (such as billboards and skywriting).

You might argue with the relative positions of some of these items. But you probably won't deny that one-to-one communication vastly outperforms publicity. Most educational institutions have used personal communication for decades, but not as sales tools. For example, you know college students prefer a classroom lecture over a correspondence course. They are even more interested in a small, exclusive seminar situation. But their ideal is to work with a professor one-to-one in a tutorial or research situation.

Business recognizes the need to get close, too. Industry frequently announces a new product with publicity and next tries to raise awareness through a direct mail campaign and advertising. Then it begins a series of targeted messages such as letters and telephone calls. Finally, it sends a sales representative to call on the customer.

Student recruitment, one of the hottest areas in education today, uses these same techniques. Publicity raises general name awareness of the institution. Promotional (Search) mailings garner prospects. An exceptional student receives a so-called "personal" letter and then a telephone call or second "personal" letter from a key faculty member or admissions officer. This second effort attempts to draw the prospect to campus for a visit or a tour. A visit offers the prospect a chance to sit through classes, meet students and faculty, and experience typical dorm life. A one-to-one talk with an admissions officer usually caps the relationship.

Experienced development officers don't believe a news release will raise gifts. Nor do they think that direct mail beats a well-run phonathon, or that a phonathon outdoes personal solicitation. They know that, ultimately, cultivation of an individual has the most impact.

So why don't more public relations practitioners use the most effective forms of communication?

Usually, cost is the problem. In most situations, the highest per-person costs come from sending out a human being to talk to another human being. The telephone costs less. Mass-produced letters are even cheaper, and mailing a news release can be the least expensive. But as you move down the communication ladder, you reduce your results.

More of us should help our development and recruitment clients establish these one-to-one relationships with carefully targeted audiences. An effective public relations plan forces communication up the ladder of effectiveness by striving constantly to narrow the audience to a manageable size. It delivers the message face-to-face, one-to-one—to our key audiences, to reporters and editors, and to our own campus colleagues.

So think twice before you get out a publication or a news release to solve a problem or blunt a crisis. If your client wants to enroll 10 students out of a universe of about 100 people, don't do a publication or news release. Instead, invest time and money in telephone calls, personal letters, and one-to-one personal contacts.

Before you tackle any communication project, ask yourself: (1) What result do I want? (2) Is there a more results-oriented, cost-effective way to handle the project than a brochure or a news release? (3) Will one-to-one communication solve the problem, sell the product, or fill the need?

Answer these, and your public relations efforts will be infinitely more productive. cnse

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Reach Out—Routinely

A small college's system shows there's more than one way to get personal

by Steven T. Syverson

A recent conversation drove home for me just how much emphasis we place now on the personal approach to recruitment. I was talking with a representative of a computer firm that helps with direct mail campaigns. What did we discuss? The use of computers to churn out large masses of seemingly personal correspondence.

This mass personalization strikes me as a contradiction in terms. At Lawrence University, a small school that's proud of its smallness, we've tried to temper this contradiction by distinguishing between "personalized" and "individualized" contact. Our definitions are arbitrary, but they help us structure our thinking.

For us, "personalized" letters are those in which we merely insert appropriate information—such as names, references to a high school or hometown, information about a student's stated interests, and so on. A computer or clerical staff member can generate this personalized correspondence from information we collect routinely with every inquiry or application.

In contrast, we use the term "individualized" to describe cases in which an admissions officer initiates direct contact with a prospect.

We see a big distinction between these two words. Intuitively, of course, we all believe that students find personalization attractive. We tend to assume that inserting students' names into their letters and perhaps referring to their hometowns or activities will make them more interested in us. So as our mechanical capabilities increase, we lean toward larger direct mail campaigns—and we personalize more and more. Various surveys of student attitudes support this practice.

And yet, in a small (and admittedly imperfect) study conducted while I was at Pomona College, we found no difference in the response rate or future behavior of those students who received personalized solicitations and those who received generic ones.

Studies at several other institutions have shown similar results. Whether or not these results apply to all institutions, the fact that they occurred in even a few cases should make us question how effective it is to personalize initial mailings.

The real problem with our thinking, though, seems to be in assuming that personalized contacts can substitute for individualized ones. Although a personalized approach may suffice in many cases, at Lawrence we try to make sure we don't forget when to get really personal as well.

When we personalize

Most of our initial inquiries from students are the generic kind—a response card from a mailing or a college fair program, or a letter simply asking for "more information." Except for very specific requests, we answer each initial inquiry with a computer-generated letter addressed, by name, to the student. The officer responsible for that geographical territory always signs the letter.

The letter usually cites a reason for the officer's assignment to the prospect's region. For instance, since I moved to Wisconsin from California less than two years ago, my territory covers the western United States. In my correspondence, I note that I'm a recent transplant and encourage the students to write me about the differences they might encounter at college in the Midwest.

All this, however, is routine. Any inquiry from the West Coast automatically comes to me. The choice of which computer-generated letter I send depends on such objective criteria as the source of the inquiry.

We may make a number of such routine contacts during the prospect development process. In some, the only personalized element may be the address label. Others might be personalized letters from departments, admissions officers, and other on-campus officers. But all are the result of an automatic process—none requires an active decision by the responsible officer.

When we get really personal

Like most admissions offices, however, we recognize that certain types of inquiries are more promising than others—for instance, children of alumni are more likely to apply than respondents to a Student Search mailing. And we can also identify certain prospects as especially attractive to Lawrence.

This is where our individualized responses come into play. These contacts occur outside of the routine—at the discretion of the assigned admissions officer.

Any admissions officer, anywhere, will take a special interest in some students and go to extra lengths to attract them to the institution. However, we seek to systematize that procedure to offer that extra effort to the greatest number of students possible.

For instance, whenever a student initiates a second contact with our office, we routinely route the contact back to the assigned admissions officer along with all previous correspondence or information. From that point on, the officer decides what type of contact is required. We like to think of this as the officer selecting from a quiver of arrows the appropriate volley for the case.

Thus, given a second contact, I might choose to continue with routine, personalized responses. Or—because not all prospects make good applicants—I may decide not to encourage the student at all. Or, acting on my own judgment, I might go to that extra effort. In that case, I decide what response will best serve the needs of the student: a nonstandard letter from a faculty member? a phone call from a current undergraduate or from one of our alumni? a call or letter from me?

Obviously, this approach requires that the admissions officer have a full quiver of arrows to choose from. And that in turn shapes the structure of other areas: our alumni admissions volunteer program, athletic recruiting, and student phone-calling projects, for example. So, although one member of our staff is responsible for the alumni admission volunteer program, she handles only its overall functioning

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and large-scale major recruiting activities involving alumni. When it comes to individualized contacts, each officer must be familiar with the volunteers in his or her territory and must be able to match them with prospects—if the officer chooses that particular approach.

Involve your insiders

We've found that we can offer individualized treatment to many more prospects by involving other members of the Lawrence community.

We encourage further development of any one-to-one contacts a prospect may have with people here.

If a tour guide is impressed with a particular visitor, we arrange for them to keep in touch. We try to keep our tour guides and overnight hosts up-to-date on the admission status of prospects they've met. We invite current students to look through our lists of prospects from their hometowns and to call the ones they know. Again, as these prospects move through the admission process, we keep their friends here informed.

We encourage, and receive, referrals of likely prospects from our alumni. When prospects show serious interest, we let the alumni know. A prospect who has repeated contact with an alumna or alumnus is much more likely to maintain an interest in Lawrence.

The individual difference

What makes our recruitment program work isn't just the variety of contact methods we use. It's the fact that our system, while ensuring personalized treatment for every prospect, allows us to go beyond the routine in any case that merits an individual approach.

Creating honest prospect relationships means more than merely providing the appropriate generic information. You need a system that is not so dependent on modern mechanical miracles that you fail to develop a personal relationship, rather than just a personalized one. **cnsa**

Admission: Possible

How to get personal in a crowd
by William H. Turner

Good morning, Mr. Phelps. Welcome to your new position as admissions officer. Somewhere outside this building are more than 1 million unsuspecting high school seniors. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to channel a sufficient fraction of that number into your institution's freshman class.

You can expect to follow the standard plan. You will catch their eye and spark their interest. You'll encourage their inquiries and court their applications. You'll bet they'll get in, hope they'll enroll, and pray they'll stay. And you can expect to lose a few—or more than a few—at every step.

But wait, there's more. Your institution has standards, after all. It's not sufficient just to get *enough* students. You have to find the *right* ones.

We don't want to worry you, Mr. Phelps. But while you're working on this, keep in mind that other highly trained admissions officers will be competing with you at every step. The only way you can make your institution stand out in the crowd is to reach all those potential students with a memorable, personal touch.

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Staking out the target

Sound impossible? Before you self-destruct, let's take a harder look at that admissions process.

Long before you worry about retention or yield or even applications, you need to identify just which prospective students you're working with. You must narrow that million-plus universe to a pool of real possibilities.

During that first step, personal contact will hardly be your primary concern. Even for a small institution, the number of prospects involved will be so large that you *must* think in terms of masses. First, you'll determine what type of student you seek, with regard to your institution's particular restrictions and its long-term goals. Then, you'll want to define a pool of potential students with the desired characteristics.

Narrowed as it is, your audience at this point will still be an anonymous mass. It is only at the next step in the process that an overall personal approach becomes possible. And, at that point, it also becomes vital.

Once a student shows interest in your institution, you can—and should—begin to recognize individuals and to respond to names, faces, interests, and personalities. Alert, personalized care and feeding will encourage the student's interests to grow, maturing to an application and perhaps enrollment.

Your job is to provide that personalized service for every student in a large contact pool. To do this, it's vital that your admissions office carefully organize its efforts.

Classified information

Many people seem to assume it's impossible to create an efficient, standard office routine without sacrificing the personal touch. Not only is such a system possible, it's necessary. Only a well-tuned system will enable you to respond promptly and appropriately to every contact from every prospect.

The high volume we deal with at Michigan State requires that sort of efficiency before we can try any kind of personal approach. Each fall, we face more than 100,000 prospective students, who turn into more than 16,000 applicants on the way to almost 7,000 freshman enrollments.

In order to consider each student's particular concerns, we need to break those masses down into manageable groups. For example, of the 100,000 who consider application, maybe only 70 have an interest in classical studies. But before we can address that specific interest, we have to identify those 70. That's what our system does for us.

The key is accurate, accessible records. You might keep your records in a shoebox full of 3-by-5 cards or in a computer data base (which is really just a fancy shoebox). Whatever you

use, you need to be able to do two things efficiently: sorting and tracking.

• *Sorting.* This allows you to divide your prospects into useful categories. You can define those categories along any number of lines: interests, academic potential, source of contact, ZIP code. What's important is that you can draw from your contact pool all prospects with a given meaningful characteristic. Thus, if you have a program that would appeal particularly to female minority mathematicians living in-state, you ought to be able to sort them out—and then send them an appropriate mailing.

• *Tracking.* Once you've responded to an initial contacts, you shouldn't forget about a student. Your system should allow for follow-ups, geared to each specific case, at appropriate stages in the admissions process.

Making contact

Of course, good record-keeping forms only the base of your routine. You have to use your information to determine the response that best fits each prospect's needs.

Although exact methods of response will vary widely, they fall into three broad categories:

• *Mailings.* These can be informational materials (brochures, forms, etc.), personalized letters generated by a computer, or actual personal letters written by admissions staff faculty, or students in response to particular needs or interests of the prospect.

• *Phone calls.* These might be general prospect development calls initiated by admissions staff or field interviewers, or responses to specific contacts from students.

• *Face-to-face contacts.* These include conversations at college fairs or on recruitment trips, personal interviews on campus, or even visits to particular top prospects.

At some point, you must evaluate the cost and benefits of any response method. Ask yourself two questions: First, given your resources (time, staff, money), how much can you do? And second, is it worth doing?

For instance, if you have 75,000 prospects, you probably won't want to spend the time and money it would take to call them all on the phone. And even if you could, and did, a good proportion of those prospects wouldn't care. You must have a means of tracking the results of your efforts so you can find out which methods prove the best for you.

Intelligence operations

Once you know what methods you can use, you need to decide which is appropriate in a given case. Several factors will determine this.

• *The source of the contact.* Your institution's experience will indicate which prospects are the most valuable to you. For example, a student who has written for information is certainly a better prospect than one whose name appeared on a purchased Search list. At Michigan State, we place particularly high priority on students who choose to send us their standardized test scores. That shows they're serious about us, and we had better take them seriously as well.

• *Information about the student.* The more you know about a prospect, the better you can tailor your follow-up. In addition to name, age, address, academic standing, test scores, and the like, try to identify the student's interests—both academic and extracurricular. Depending on your own institution's strengths and special programs, you may want to make special appeals by ethnic group, sex, financial status, religion, and the like.

This type of information forms the core of our personal approach. If a student tells us he or she is interested in forestry—a department within our agriculture college—we'll use that as one key. Depending on other factors, he or she may get a department brochure, a computer-generated letter from the dean's office at the agriculture school, or a personal letter from a professor in the forestry department.

Another example: We do an annual sorting for students interested in music as a hobby. They get a special mailing about the extracurricular musical opportunities on campus.

• *The timing of the response.* The questions students ask in October are not the same ones they ask in April. Your communications should address their current concerns.

In our case, we know that in the fall of the senior year students are just beginning to think about applying. They want to know about admissions criteria and their chances for getting in. By spring, a student who has been admitted to several schools will be more interested in financial aid information or details on housing options.

Never forget to remind the student why you are contacting him or her in particular, at this particular time. Cue the prospect on the appropriate response: Provide a form to return for more information or an application for admission and financial aid.

But did you succeed?

The ultimate measure of any prospect development process is the conversion ratio. This is the ratio of prospective students who act on their initial interest by applying. Over time, that ratio shows how effective your prospect development efforts are.

Since the first phases of the admissions process involve large, relatively anonymous masses of students, the concept of getting personal can be only a small part of the whole process. But like the foundation of any good structure, the initial steps set the pace for all that follows. If you don't strive for a personal touch early on, you won't be able to establish that personal contact when it is vital—at the application and enrollment stages.

Getting personal in a crowd isn't easy. But without a strong effort at the beginning, the rest of the admissions process may be extremely vulnerable—or even impossible. **cnt**

Come On Up And See Us Sometime

A campus visit gives students a first-hand look
by Debra L. Rubins

"Hi. My name is Julie Young. If I look like an exhausted, overworked, malnourished, poor—that is to say typical—college student, there's a good reason. I am. You see, I'm a real live undergraduate here, not an employee. And I'm not here to sell you on Northwestern. I'm just here to explain it to you."

Julie, a junior in electrical engineering, introduced her fellow student panelists and smiled at her audience of 125 high school seniors and parents. "That's all we've prepared," she said. "The topic is student life, and we've got 50 minutes. Let's hear some of your questions."

Julie's comments typified our approach to the 600 visitors who had traveled from 31 different states (including Alaska) to attend one of Northwestern's campus visitation programs. The approach seems to work. About 4,600 such visitors—parents and students—came to our organized group programs last year. Of the 2,200 or so students who visited, 80 percent applied for admission. And 86 percent of those we admitted chose to enroll.

Traditional student recruitment efforts aim at bringing the mountain to Mohammed—that is, the institution to the student. They do this primarily through brochures and visits to high schools. As the competition for students gets stiffer, institutions have channeled their energies into more colorful publications or more frequent school contacts. Only recently have admissions staffs begun to realize the value of bringing Mohammed to the mountain instead.

What students want from a visit

Brochures and traveling admission staff members can describe only broadly what an institution has to offer. Such information presumably will attract a student and perhaps encourage him or her to apply. But it cannot answer the basic questions of "What is it really like?" and "Is this the right place for me?"

When prospective students visit a campus, they have certain hopes. They are looking for students who are like them and for instructors who are interesting—and interested in them. Consequently, the goals of a visitation program should be to place prospects and their parents in contact with a variety of faculty and students. Faculty members, talking about their programs on their own turf, and undergraduates, sharing their own experiences, are the institution's best recruiters.

Of course, when an institution opens itself up to critical review by prospective students and their parents, it assumes some risk. A cynical faculty member or disenchanted student might offer negative views. But if you expect this possibility, you can moderate it by offering visitors a variety of contacts and experiences.

Planning your program

When you organize a visitation program, there are a few questions you should answer at the start.

- *What type of visits should we arrange?* Many institutions arrange individual visits for students upon request. Some sponsor special programs for selected students. Others rely upon larger, general presentations to accommodate visitors.
- *To which groups of students should we direct our program?* Some institutions focus only on students who have already been admitted, or on those who have already applied. Others, in an attempt to increase their applicant pool, sponsor programs for prospects as early as the junior year of high school.
- *When should we offer the programs?* Individual visits might be arranged at any time during the year. Timing of more elaborate programs will depend on how much progress your audience has made in the college selection process.
- *What should we offer?* You might consider tours, interviews with admissions officers, talks by students or faculty members, observation of scheduled classes, or overnight stays.
- *How—and how much—shall we structure the visit?* Depending on the image and information you want to present, you may opt for a formal schedule of group events. You might allow the students to wander freely. Or you could choose a combination of those approaches. The size and nature of your institution will determine the visit's structure.

The Northwestern program

At Northwestern, we developed a visitation program that includes, at some point or another, nearly every option listed above.

All prospects receive a brochure inviting them to visit the campus on their own. We arrange some 3,500 such individual visits a year. These often consist of a personal interview with an admissions officer, one of the campus tours conducted daily by undergraduate volunteers, and an overnight stay with a student host in one of the campus residence halls.

In addition to these individual visits, we invite all prospective students to participate in at least one of our larger organized programs, which we offer seven times during the year.

Large-scale offerings

Our organized group programs come in three forms, reflecting three different stages of the admissions process. They run like this:

- *For prospective students: Open House.* To assist in-state residents still unfamiliar with college selection, we start out with two open house programs in September. We invite families from Illinois, our primary market, to spend Sunday afternoon at Northwestern. The free, four-hour program typically includes a general introduction, campus tour, faculty presentations, and special-interest discussions. Last year, some 1,300 students and parents attended these programs.

We try to prompt questions rather than simply provide answers. Faculty from each of our six undergraduate schools talk about different academic

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areas. Topics for special-interest sessions include the admission process, financial aid, housing and student life, extracurricular activities, athletics and recreation, pre-professional majors, and special academic programs.

We also try to balance the information we offer. One enthusiastic parent commented last year that he was more confused when he left than when he arrived! He had come expecting to be sold on Northwestern, but instead he had discovered an array of options. Indeed, that was our objective. We wanted to stimulate the audience to think, not just about our institution, but also about the issues that should influence their college decision.

• *For applicants: The Northwestern Overnight.* In November, we modify our format to address students who have already applied. The major change is lengthening the visit to include an overnight stay on campus. This gives the students a stronger sense of what attending Northwestern would be like for them.

In arranging the Overnight, we attempt to match the visitors with volunteer student hosts who share similar academic interests. This gives the visitors a chance to talk at length with enrolled students.

Prospects can choose to stay in a residence hall or in a sorority or fraternity. Each student pays a small fee to cover two meals. We recommend hotels for the parents, who attend the sessions free. We brought a total of about 850 students over three weekends for these programs last year.

Scheduling each overnight program on a Sunday and Monday allows us to combine a more formal, session-oriented approach on Sunday with an unstructured day on Monday. Even though particular classes and options are listed in a packet we hand out at registration, we encourage students to wander where they will during their visit. Recently, we decided to put less emphasis on interview appointments. We want students to spend their time "sniffing out" the campus rather than sitting in the admissions office.

A major feature of these modified programs is the opportunity to attend classes. Some institutions, in an effort to tailor their presentations to high school audiences, offer a model or "mock" lecture instead of inviting the students to observe regular classes. We believe that such a trade-off sacrifices the free, everyday exchange between faculty and undergraduates, which provides an unobscured view of the academic atmosphere.

• *For accepted students: Day at Northwestern.* This annual April program, which also includes an overnight stay, brought in about 500 admitted students. This event is similar to the overnight program: We invite students and parents to spend a Friday exploring on their own, and then we plan a series of events Friday evening and Saturday designed to welcome them to the university community. Through this program we provide more detailed information about both the academic and social life at Northwestern. The invitation to "wear comfortable walking shoes and come prepared for predictable fun and unpredictable weather" sets the tone.

Last year we began to offer a similar "Winter Welcome" program for students admitted under our early notification option. Planning a February visit, a risky venture in our part of the country, required a somewhat different stance: "Bring your boots, mittens, and parents, too, and enjoy the warmth of winter at Northwestern." About 250 students did.

Concerning parents

Parents are obviously an integral part of the college selection process. Realistically, if cost is a factor in attending a given institution, parents play a significant role. And if they don't like a particular institution, their child is not likely to apply or enroll. Far too often admissions officers assume that parents are informed through and reassured by information sent to their children. This is not always the case. Similarly, campus visitation programs often exclude the parents, or include them only peripherally.

Don't forget to answer the parents' concerns, perhaps in the form of a session on "Everything You Wanted to Know About College But Have Been Afraid to Ask in the Presence of Your Child." The value of this goes beyond the particular program. Every visitor to your campus has the potential of becoming an ambassador of good—or bad—will. Parents are no exception.

Bigger and better

We're always on the lookout for ways to bring more prospects to campus. One idea our staff adopted last year was to target a new National Overnight Program to prospective students outside our traditional markets. By inviting students who previously had not considered such a visit, we were able to stimulate interest beyond what our brochures evoke.

A visitation program like ours depends on student involvement. If your institution wants to encourage volunteerism among alumni, then the admissions office can provide a marvelous training ground for students. Volunteer work by both students and faculty shows the visitor these people care about their institution and, in the context of admissions, have some stake in the type of student being recruited.

Most of our volunteers come from two organizations: an all-campus service organization and a Student Admission Committee. These groups, plus the students who host visitors overnight, involve more than 600 undergraduates in our recruitment efforts.

Prospective students who have some interest in an institution are, admittedly, the most likely to visit the campus. Such self-selection presumably biases any attempt to measure the success of visitation programs. Yet historically we have found that a student who visits Northwestern is more likely to apply and, if admitted, more likely to enroll. Our statistics make a solid case not only for offering a visitation program, but for strongly promoting it as well.

A good campus visitation program proves its value both to the institution and the student. Often, a prospective student who comes with mixed feelings is excited by the visit and decides to apply or enroll. Sometimes a visiting student may decide that the institution is not the right one but still leaves with a positive impression. In that case, the program has still served an important purpose.

By bringing prospective students to the campus, we help ensure that the institution and the student are well-matched. And we help promote the best decision for both. **cnsa**

Section 5

Students and Alumni: Recruiting Person-to-Person

Perfect Pitch

How to put the "student" in student recruitment
by Judith G. Myers

Whether the product is candy bars, carpets, or computers, nothing sells like a satisfied customer. And when the product is education, enthusiastic college students make ideal salespeople. Realizing this, many colleges and universities are drawing on their current students to help attract new ones.

These student recruiters use various marketing strategies. They help with recruitment literature; serve as hosts to visitors; and telephone, write, or visit interested students. And students often work in the admissions office.

In a recent survey, we asked colleges and universities throughout the nation how they use enrolled students for student recruitment. We now pass along their sales techniques to you.

Planning recruitment literature

Students may help design, write, or evaluate your recruitment literature.

When Drew University updated the 1984 prospectus for its College of Liberal Arts, Drew started by getting ideas from both faculty and students. The public relations staff treated students to a lasagna dinner and, in return, the students made suggestions on the theme "Fifty well-known reasons to be at Drew and 50 little-known reasons to be at Drew." The staff recorded the dinner conversation and eventually used more than half of the students' ideas.

"This gives students some ownership in the literature," says University Relations Director Cynthia Moran. "And we're not coming out with something students here laugh at." For other institutions using this technique, Moran recommends doing both individual and group interviews. Group discussions stimulate brainstorming, she says, but the individual interviews prompt more candid responses.

At Bryn Mawr College, Public Information Director Debra Thomas talked informally with students to solicit advice about its new prospectus. The students shared some helpful ideas. For example, "They said that the pictures we had did not look very welcoming, so we changed the photos to have more students looking directly at the viewer."

Before Connecticut College decided to publish profiles of five students in its viewbook, the staff asked those students for help in planning and producing it. But student involvement in the viewbook didn't stop there. Connecticut also sent out some of its students to talk to high school students and see what kind of information they look for in a viewbook. These findings also influenced the final product.

Before printing its recruitment literature, Mills College has students review the proposed designs and help choose one. Students also evaluate the photographs.

Hosting tours and other events

Students can play a valuable role by serving as hosts during campus visits.

When interested high school students visit Ryerson Polytechnical Institute for one of several carefully planned orientation programs, current students pitch in. They act as guides during tours and discussions; they have lunch with prospects and share their thoughts informally at open houses; and they chat over coffee about specific majors and courses.

At the University of the Pacific, students even share their rooms with prospects during the overnight programs the university hosts each spring and fall. On the first day, UOP students take their guests on tours and help them participate in programs; on the second day they help them find their way to classes of their choice.

A similar weekend program awaits applicants to Clarke College, where student hosts greet them, take them to meals and classes, and give tours of the campus. The weekends, dubbed "College Try" and "Sneak Preview," are held in the fall and spring.

"It gives them a basis for comparison and is great fun for everyone," says Admissions Counselor Brigid Duffy. "We have as much fun as the students who come out for it."

Clarke also sponsors smaller campus visits throughout the year. The college sends vans to nearby cities to pick prospects up. An admissions counselor and a Clarke student ride along to answer the prospects' questions.

Some institutions organize their student tour guides into formal groups. At Georgetown University, students vie for admission into the selective Blue and Gray Club, which conducts tours for visitors. Students at Western Illinois University may participate in a student ambassador association. The association, funded by the student activities and admissions offices, has its own constitution. Its members conduct both group and individual tours.

Telephoning

Many institutions maintain student-to-prospect contact via the phone lines. During student phonathons, callers can encourage prospects to apply, answer questions, and persuade accepted students to come.

At Louisiana's Centenary College, 23 current students, all members of the Centenary Student Foundation, call prospects from their academic majors and/or geographic areas. The reward? Dinner and a free 10-minute long-distance call for each student caller.

Through these calls, "We find out who's still interested and who's not," says Charles Prosser, associate director of admissions. "It shows us what we need to send to those students who are still interested in us."

The payoff can be quick. One prospect learned through the phonathon that Centenary offered an internship in physical therapy. Centenary received his application, test scores, and transcript within a week.

University of the Pacific aims its phonathons at accepted applicants. UOP students call to offer congratulations and to answer any questions. Assistant Director of Admissions Anne Seed believes high school students feel more comfortable talking to college students. As she puts it, "They probably say, 'I'm going to get it the way it is from current students. They'll really level with me.' "

The University of Michigan has replaced its call-in program with a write-in campaign. In a newsletter sent

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to all admitted students, a Student Alumni Council ad invites the prospective freshmen to write Michigan students and ask questions. The ad even suggests topics prospects might want to discuss.

Writing

Many institutions tuck letters from students in with information they send to applicants. The United States Student Association recommends that you follow up any inquiry from a prospect with literature and/or a letter from the student body president and the student newspaper editor.

At Lawrence University's Conservatory of Music, students both call and write prospects.

In the fall, Georgetown University prospects from low-enrollment areas, such as the Rocky Mountain states, get personal replies from enrolled students in answer to specific questions. Some typical questions: "How can I get involved in student government?" and "Can you tell me about your student newspaper?"

More than 500 student ambassadors at Western Illinois link up with their own or neighboring high schools in a pen pal program launched each February. Each volunteer writes to 50 to 80 prospects, some of whom the WI ambassador has probably met before.

Wells College targets its student correspondence to the applicants' extracurricular interests. "If someone applies whose interest is the yearbook, we make sure that the editor of the yearbook writes," says Olive Moochler, associate director of admissions. "If someone is a real soccer fiend, we get a member of the soccer team to write."

Visiting

For many students, taking a vacation means taking their college or university home with them—to their former high school. These students, either alone or with an admissions counselor, talk to juniors and seniors during winter or spring breaks.

Mills students "take Mills home" to places like Hawaii and Massachusetts as well as England, Canada, and Saudi Arabia. Before they set off, though, the students attend two-hour training sessions and receive a packet of literature for background information. According to Admissions Dean Diana Odermatt, Mills students initiated the new program and have enthusiastically volunteered for it. "There's nothing like a satisfied customer to give a recommendation," she says.

Student ambassadors from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay visit their high schools—about 15 in all—along with college counselors. They sit in on discussions to give a current student's point of view and to answer questions.

Western Illinois students themselves set the format for their vacation visits to high school juniors and seniors. "It's a soft-sell approach," says Admissions Director David Beaver. "Our students try to tell the high school students what they wish they'd known."

Before sending current students to visit area high schools, the University of the Pacific tells them what to expect. "They're trained to answer the questions we know they'll get from prospective students," says Assistant Director of Admissions Anne Seed.

Bryn Mawr College prefers a more relaxed setting for its recruiting. The college invites current students to its introduction parties for prospects. These parties, planned in various cities throughout the country, introduce Bryn Mawr to high school students.

Helping in the admissions office

At many institutions, students participate even more intensely in the recruitment process by working in the admissions office.

At Lawrence, senior interns work 10 to 12 hours a week. They organize student visits, conduct interviews, and maintain contact with prospects.

The Wells College admissions office has six student staff assistants and 13 student tour guides and/or clerks. All are work-study students who are paid on an hourly basis. In addition, two students sit on the Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid.

Eleven students at Duquesne University work on admissions office activities. A part-time graduate assistant helps the counselor by visiting high schools, interviewing students, planning special recruitment weekends, attending meetings, and writing reports. In addition, 10 work-study students help with clerical work, conduct tours, and work on special projects.

Benefits—and bonuses

Whatever your brand of education, don't overlook your current students' potential in recruiting. When carefully selected and trained, they're a great asset. And the experience can mean more to them than the chance to perfect a sales pitch. It gives them poise, experience, and a genuine appreciation of their institution. **case**

Let Your Students Do the Talking

The University of Delaware found in-house "experts" to design its recruitment package

by Thomas H. Bivins

Our recruitment publications had been coasting on their own momentum for years. Except for an annually updated viewbook, the materials rarely changed. Yes, the package was extensive. But it lacked direction and cohesion, despite the efforts of our admissions staff and professional agencies and consultants.

That was the situation at the University of Delaware when the admissions office approached the university's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) about working on a routine recruitment brochure. And that's when the admissions staff decided to turn this simple project into a full-scale revamping of UD's recruitment package.

The admissions staff felt that the ones most likely to understand the

needs of new students would be students themselves. So the staff hired PRSSA—not as a student agency, but as a working department of the university under the admissions office.

A fresh view

We charged the students with developing an entire recruitment program from scratch. We asked them to focus on areas they felt would attract other young people to Delaware. Working as a subunit of admissions relieved the group of the need to handle a budget, although part of the process would require gathering estimates.

The biggest hurdle was a presentation due to the admissions staff after two months. At that time, the university would judge the merits of the proposal and then decide whether to carry it further.

The starting point, of course, was research. Much of it was already available through the university's Office of Institutional Research. We had on hand the demographic characteristics of potential students as well as documented reasons why students chose to attend or not to attend UD.

Once a research committee retrieved the most pertinent information, the entire PRSSA met to assess direction and share ideas.

First the students decided that what the university needed most was an identity. No standard logo or device represented the University of Delaware, and it had no slogan. After researching the various identifying devices other universities use, PRSSA created a logo from an existing architectural motif—a 1930s woodcut of "Old College," a group of buildings steeped in tradition. Old College connotes stability and prestige—qualities that, along with academic excellence and location, play into the selection of a university.

The students also chose the slogan "Picture U at Delaware," with an accent on the "UD" motif. They designed the slogan for use in all print material and in proposed radio and television spots.

Beyond the logo, the key to the new recruitment package would be consistent design and color presented through an aggressive ad campaign. The package would include attention-getting ads and posters, promotions such as the redesigned viewbook, and informative brochures that elaborated on UD's various programs. The components could work individually or as a set. The package would be designed to increase flexibility and save on printing and mailing.

The students formed committees to handle each component of the handle each component of the package. Each group was to crystallize the ideas and present rough drafts of recommended designs and copy.

Time was tight, since the first chapter meeting for the entire PRSSA was in September and the presentation was due in late November. Committees had to report to the whole organization within two weeks with their recommendations. Then the group produced comps, sample radio and television spots, and the narrative for the presentation itself.

The result

The presentation for the staff and dean of admissions came off right on schedule. The project had blossomed into a full-fledged campaign focusing on six major areas the students thought would be of the most interest to prospective students: the arts, the sciences, athletics, technology, business, and student life. The campaign package included:

- a folder design for the press packet;
- ideas and copy for six posters as well as comps for two of them and smaller versions for print ads;
- ideas and copy for six related radio spots along with two fully produced spots;
- copy for two TV spots with an audio version of one spot to be played with slide accompaniment;
- a redesigned viewbook cover with sample page layout and copy;
- ideas and copy for nine brochures representing UD's nine colleges, along with layout and design for one complete brochure; and
- a newly designed student handbook focusing on campus life and housing.

The students handled a lengthy question-and-answer period like pros. Afterward, the dean of admissions commented that presentations by other *professional* public relations agencies had fallen far short of PRSSA's.

In fact, the response was so positive that the admissions office immediately scheduled another session for the president, provost, and dean of students. After this, the administration was pleased enough to give its go-ahead on the proposed package.

We decided to hire a consultant only for broadcast productions and placement. At the recommendation of PRSSA, the admissions office would do the remainder of the writing, design, layout, and printing in-house.

A productive partnership

In the end, our partnership with PRSSA was good for both the chapter and the university. Our students got real-world experience in developing a persuasive package of publications. And we got new life in our student recruitment pieces—complete with expert opinions on what prospective students *really* look for. CASE

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Recruit Students to Recruit

by Frederick Fess

When enrollment declined at Western Illinois University in fall 1976 (our first decline in over 15 years), we turned to our students for recruitment ideas. Why not ask us to help, they suggested. The result was our Student Ambassadors Program, set up in the 1976-77 academic year.

Here's what we did.

Our first step was to recruit our recruiters—dubbed ambassadors. We wanted them to be successful students who knew something about WIU. Our office sent letters to 2,500 WIU students who had maintained a grade point average of at least 2.5 out of a possible 4.0 after completing two terms.

In our letters, we asked students interested in participating in the recruitment process to contact our office.

At most, we expected 100 to sign up. The response was tremendous. We recruited 200 volunteers. And this number rose to 300 during 1977-78.

Our ambassadors then attended training sessions led by the admissions staff. At these meetings, staffers explained admission applications procedures. They also provided each volunteer with a list of prospective students from the volunteer's high school. During academic breaks, ambassadors visited these students. They also served as hosts when prospective students and their parents visited the campus.

What are the program's results? So far, it hasn't slowed our enrollment decline, but we've reaped benefits of another sort. Our staff has been able to find out first-hand the positive and negative images that prospects have of the institution.

Another by-product has been positive hometown news about students. Each year, the Office of University News Services sends out news releases explaining the program's purpose, how we select ambassadors, and who they are. We've found that over 80 percent of the media outlets that receive the materials use them.

Students benefit, too. Many ambassadors find that the work provides a way to learn more about their institution. The program also seems to pull other students closer to WIU. For instance, several student organizations have offered to help recruit. Student members write personal letters, prepare special publications, and visit schools. Some students with declared majors have offered to discuss their majors with interested prospects. **cnsa**

Frederick Fess, formerly dean of admissions at Western Illinois University in Macomb, , is now acting director of admissions and assistant dean of admissions and records at WIU.

NOVEMBER 1978

Ambassadors with Portfolio

Alumni and students form a diplomatic corps to help recruit students to Buena Vista College

by Scott C. Stevenson and Kent McElvania

When Buena Vista College commissioned a marketing study of prospective students in the mid-1970s, the results were far from encouraging. The study's grim forecast:

1. The State of Iowa would experience an approximate 28 percent decline in the number of graduating high school seniors between 1979 and 1990.
2. Because 95 percent of our students come from a 250-mile radius of our campus in Storm Lake, our pool of prospects would shrink proportionately.

Scott C. Stevenson was formerly director of major gifts and Kent McElvania was director of admissions at Buena Vista College in Storm Lake, Iowa. Stevenson is now director of development at the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in Des Moines. McElvania is director of admissions at Upper Iowa University in Fayette.

This bad news had its good side. It forced us to re-examine both our college and our market. It showed us that to thrive—not to mention survive—in the '80s, we would have to mobilize our recruitment resources. We soon realized that, naturally enough, one of our greatest untapped resources was the people who were already sold on Buena Vista: our students and alumni.

In 1978, that realization led us to form our Ambassador Program, Buena Vista's official alumni recruitment group.

So far, we've been pleased with the program's results. On the average, we receive 172 prospective student referrals per year from our ambassadors. Of those referrals, 22 percent apply, and 84 percent who apply enroll. This means we enroll 33 students per year who might not otherwise choose Buena Vista. We've been impressed enough with these figures to add a new staff person to manage and expand the program.

Our program operates on two levels:

Student ambassadors

The first is the student level. Consultant Arthur C. Frantzreb calls this the "alumni-in-residence" level. Too often, we in alumni relations segregate students from alumni. That's a mistake. Each "alumnus-in-residence" should have the opportunity to refer names of prospective students to the admissions office or become involved in the admissions effort.

At Buena Vista, we call the official student admissions organization "Esprit de Corps." The volunteer organization consists of 25 members, and existing members select new members through screening and personal interviews. Fortunately, Esprit de Corps has become one of the more prestigious organizations on campus, and, as a result, finding qualified students is not a problem. In 1982, more than 70 students applied for 11 openings.

Once selected, the student ambassadors participate in a day-long session that trains them to be effective salespersons for the college and acquaints

them with Buena Vista's specific objectives for the academic year. At the end of the seminar, members receive a windbreaker with "Esprit de Corps" on the back. The students wear these jackets when they conduct campus tours for prospective students.

Although conducting tours was the main thrust of the student organization at one time, members now participate in several other activities including:

- helping with direct mail, which involves everything from stuffing envelopes to writing personal notes;
- making telephone contact with prospective students;
- writing and assembling the *Ambassador Report,* the newsletter that's sent to all alumni ambassadors and prospective ambassadors; and
- making personal contacts with prospective students in their home towns during vacation breaks. We also hold monthly meetings to evaluate their progress.

As with any volunteer organization, constant recognition is a must. We sponsor an annual Christmas banquet and a year-end awards banquet to recognize students who've made significant contributions to our admissions effort.

But from what we can tell, Esprit de Corps members appreciate us as much as we appreciate them. As one student said, "Last year I helped write copy for some of the admissions brochures in addition to conducting campus tours. The writing experience has helped me develop skills as a communications major." Another student enjoyed the experience for a different reason: "Some of my closest friendships began in Esprit de Corps. We work as a team, and do we ever have fun!"

Alumni ambassadors

Once students graduate, they have the opportunity to refer names of prospective students to the admissions office or to become actively involved with Buena Vista's alumni recruitment effort. To encourage continued participation, we provide active alumni with two periodicals: *Buena Vista Today,* the college's quarterly alumni magazine, and the *Ambassador Report,* the official recruitment newsletter, which is mailed year-round. The newsletter keeps our ambassadors informed of all aspects of what's happening in the college community and recognizes alumni who assist in the admissions effort.

Alumni who take an active interest in recruitment are appointed ambassadors. We purposely began this program with small numbers, but as the popularity of the program grew, so did the number of participants. In 1978 we had seven ambassadors, six from Iowa and one from Minnesota. In 1982 we had 45 ambassadors, 39 of whom were from Iowa. In addition, about 175 other alumni helped out with recruitment.

Once ambassadors are appointed, we send standard news releases to their hometowns. Then we invite them to participate in the annual ambassador seminar in August. We combine the seminar with Buena Vista's Founders Day to encourage attendance and give alumni a chance to spend an entire weekend on campus.

During the seminar, we train the ambassadors in:

- the admissions process and its objectives;
- academic offerings and their various requirements;
- the basics of financial aid; and
- student life policies and organizations.

The session concludes with an opportunity for the ambassadors to evaluate the program and take a campus tour.

Ambassador objectives

To meet their individual objectives, the ambassadors use a methodical approach. We expect them to:

1. *Establish contact with several influential individuals.* These include people such as guidance counselors and ministers in their geographic areas.
2. *Attend local career nights.* They always attend with a Buena Vista admissions counselor.
3. *Conduct personal interviews with interested high school seniors.* Afterward they report the results to the admissions office.
4. *Review computer printouts of high school students who've inquired about the college.* Then the ambassadors call these prospects.

If a newly appointed ambassador is shy about telephoning uncultivated prospects, we provide a list of students who have applied to Buena Vista. These students are likely to be more receptive because they're enthusiastic enough to apply. As the alumnus gains confidence, we then provide lists of inquiries (students who have written for information). These lists offer an ideal way for out-of-state alumni to help with recruitment. When an admissions counselor is unable to visit with distant prospective students, our ambassador in that area can add the personal touch through a call or visit.

5. *Host a reception for prospective students and their parents.* This is usually one of the most rewarding activities for the ambassador. One or more college representatives are generally on hand at the reception, and after a slide presentation, the representatives answer questions about financial aid, placement, or whatever. This, too, provides a personal touch.

6. *Visit the campus.* This is another important objective for ambassadors within driving distance of the campus. We make every effort to keep ambassadors aware of campus events and to encourage them to bring groups of students to the college. Experience shows that if a prospective student visits Buena Vista, the probability that the student will enroll is much greater.

7. *Follow-up with prospects.* This is especially important as the student pool narrows to those with serious interest in the college. Our ambassadors focus on these prospects until they make their final decisions.

One other important phase of the Ambassador Program involves evaluation. We make midyear and year-end evaluations at the student, alumni, and ambassador levels. This gives us a chance to review, for example: the number of alumni involved, the name referrals we received, the student contacts we made, and how many receptions we sponsored for how many people. The evaluations enable us to target the specific programs that help us use our resources best. Once we've conducted evaluations at these three levels, the college's admissions committee and the president review them.

Of course, no alumni-student recruitment program can remove the threat posed by today's enrollment trends by itself. Nevertheless, programs like Buena Vista's can become a strong supplement to an institution's overall survival strategy. CASE

Human Interest

Penn admissions makes a Connecticut connection with alumnus Herman Rosen
by Anne Hinman Diffily

The door of Herman Rosen's home in West Hartford, Connecticut, opens to reveal a man whose gentle smile crinkles the corners of his eyes. His is a handshake that says, unmistakably, "Welcome."

He guides the visitor into his living room. It's furnished in the colors of his beloved University of Pennsylvania, from the red Oriental rugs to the blue-checked fireplace chairs to the needlepoint sofa pillow depicting the University of Pennsylvania seal. Even the man himself is wearing a blue sweater with maroon and cream bands around the neck. Rosen, who graduated from Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business in 1936, swears that as a toddler his daughter sang "The Red and Blue" for visitors from rival Cornell.

A warm greeting, a casual demeanor, and the omnipresent colors of his alma mater typify Rosen's volunteer work as a student interviewer for Penn's undergraduate admissions office. This folksy yet intelligent style has endeared "Hum," as he's known, to hundreds of Penn applicants. Many of them keep in touch with him years after graduating from the university.

Rosen chairs the Secondary School Committee for Penn's Greater Hartford Alumni Club. "Most alumni clubs have an organization that helps the undergraduate admissions office in recruitment," says DeDe Chirgwin, associate director of alumni affairs for the Wharton School and previously a regional director of undergraduate admissions at Penn. "And all of them wish they had a Hum Rosen.

"So many of our students have said the reason they went to Penn was Hum. He is truly genuine in his love for the university and in his caring for the students he meets. I've even heard him say, 'Penn may not be the place for you.' By being frank, he brings out a frankness on the student's part that is rare in an interview situation. He puts students very much at ease."

For his decades of service Rosen was awarded the University of Pennsylvania Alumni Association's highest honor, an Award of Merit, in 1977. "You will go anywhere," his citation noted, "at any time, in any kind of weather to talk about Pennsylvania to a superb scholar, to a top athlete, or to any other outstanding youth."

"My first recruit was our baby sitter," Rosen recalls. "This was back in 1950 or so. We took a liking to her, and when she was about to graduate from high school I said, 'You know, I think you should go to Penn.' She applied and was accepted. That was the real beginning of my involvement."

Rosen describes his early work for Penn admissions as "a hit-or-miss proposition. In the 1950s, Penn wasn't well known in New England. If we had 12 or 15 applications from the Greater Hartford region, we considered ourselves lucky.

"Last year, from the same area, we had about 160 applications. I like to think that I've helped build some of that visibility for Penn. I used to visit all the schools and hold functions for the counselors at local clubs."

In recent decades, Penn has refined and expanded alumni involvement in the admissions area. So Rosen, who recently retired as an executive with a Hartford construction equipment company, will occasionally pinch-hit at a college night when a university representative can't be in the area. But he mostly sticks to interviewing students at his home, making himself available for questions, and hosting an annual cookout for entering freshmen and upperclassmen from the area.

"Hum is Penn's man in Hartford," Chirgwin says. She adds that Rosen and his wife, Joyce, "put me up many, many times when I was traveling in New England. I practically became one of the family."

Fireside chats

Rosen himself seems to become part of other families through his volunteer work. Sue Montano (Wharton '84), who now works in New York City, recalls how her older brother was recruited in 1972.

"My father was a mailman in West Hartford," she says, "and Mr. Rosen was on his route. They got to be friends, and when my brother was applying to colleges, Mr. Rosen talked to him." Her brother ended up at Penn.

"When it was time for me to look at colleges," Montano continues, "Mr. Rosen told my father, 'Send her over.' I wanted to go to Penn anyway, but he made it easier. He gave me an idea of what the school was really like so that it was more than just words and pictures in a catalog. And he put me at ease immediately."

Montano, who returns often to visit her family in West Hartford, kept in touch with Rosen during her years at Penn. "I used to call him twice a year, and I called him right after I graduated last spring."

Among Rosen's other discoveries over the years has been a young man who mentioned an interest in polo. Rosen directed him to Penn's polo club coach (who also happened to be an admissions representative). Another find was a high school valedictorian who couldn't decide between engineering school or a business degree. Rosen told him about Penn's Management and Technology Program, which combines work in the School of Engineering with study at the Wharton School for a dual major.

"I arranged for this boy to go down to Penn and see someone in the program," Rosen says. "He came back and called me and asked, 'How do I apply for early decision?' "

Although his style is informal, Rosen is clear about what an interview should include. Sitting in one of the comfortable fireside chairs in his living room, he explains, "There are a few primary objectives. One, you should answer any questions a student has. Two, you should listen to what the student has to say. I'll ask, 'What would you like to study?' But before they answer I tell them, 'If you don't know yet, just say so. Feel free to answer honestly.' Now, they're more apt to say if they're not sure. They'll open up, and one thing will lead to another.

"The interview also gives me a good idea of the student's enthusiasm for the university. I would never put any-

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one on the spot and ask, 'Is Penn your first choice?' " Through his or her words, Rosen believes, each student will reveal the answer.

Location is critical to the success of an interview, Rosen feels. "I've always interviewed students at home, on weekends, or in the evenings. I felt my office was too formal a setting. When we make contact on the telephone, I tell them, 'Look, this is a very informal interview. Come dressed as you please. Don't worry about being a little late or a little early.' The more at ease they are, the better they'll perform and the more I'll learn.

"I am interested only in that individual. If a student comes with a parent, I give the parent something to read in the living room—maybe some information about financial aid—and take the student into my den. It's important to get the student alone. Having a parent in the room puts the student on the spot."

Today's college applicants have several major concerns that crop up during interviews. "There's the financial situation," says Rosen. "I try to reassure them that there is no correlation between the admission decision and financial need, and that the financial picture is such that if they are admitted, their needs will be covered. If the student doesn't bring financial aid up, I will. I make sure, even if they are even only thinking about it, that they apply for aid."

Does he ever caution a student whose credentials are weak?

"I don't discourage anyone from applying," Rosen says, "but I may try to tell someone in a nice way that this may be a long shot. I'm not a professional admissions person, and it's not my place to discourage anyone. The only thing a student has to lose is time and the application fee. So I might say, 'Look, I think your chances are going to be slim. But if you're willing to take a shot, do it.' "

Rosen stresses to applicants the importance of a visit to the Penn campus. "It's not that you pick a college only for its physical characteristics," he says, "but going down there gives a student a much better idea of what the place is like in all ways. Most of them come back and call me—I always ask them to call—and they say, 'It was great!'

"I used to drive students down there myself. I'd get them put up in a dorm, arrange to see a basketball or football game, and drive back on Sunday. But I've stopped doing that because we have so many youngsters applying now that I don't want to discriminate by only taking some."

Bedside chats

Frequent visits to campus keep Rosen up-to-date on what's happening at Penn, as do myriad mailings he receives from the university's admissions and alumni offices. His energy for learning more about his alma mater has never flagged, even when he's been challenged by a series of critical health problems.

"I've had three coronaries, beginning when I was 40," Rosen says cheerfully. "Seven years ago, I had quadruple bypass surgery.

"But in between coronaries I'd do things like drive down to Penn and back in one day. My wife, Joyce, has always tagged along with me. She still teaches in an inner-city Hartford school, but she has been involved in all these activities of mine. Even though Joyce graduated from Simmons, in our family we've awarded her an honorary Penn degree!

"This work has been a big help to my mental well-being. My interest in young people has helped me physically, too: I feel better when I'm doing something for them."

Rosen recalls conducting four interviews from his hospital bed before the bypass surgery. Another time, when he had his second heart attack, he was hospitalized in August—just before the date of his annual get-acquainted cookout for Penn freshmen.

"I said to my wife, 'Joyce, what's going to happen to the party?' After listening to me, she decided it would help me the most if she went ahead and held the party. So we did it!"

A friendly follow-up

Rosen's involvement with applicants extends beyond the recruitment process. "I always call everyone who has been accepted to congratulate them," he says. "I also call youngsters I've gotten to know well, even if they haven't been admitted. That's a tough job."

His approach to persuading those who have been admitted to matriculate is subtle but persistent. "I tell them how pleased I am and how much I think they could get out of Penn. I save all my interview notes, and I put my data about each student on a card. Then I can pull that card out and tell them why Penn would be the right place for them. For instance, if a student has mentioned enjoying travel, I can remind them about Penn's junior year abroad program.

"Usually I ask them to call me when they've made up their mind. There are kids I'd like to pressure, but I won't put any overt pressure on. I know what it's like to decide. They know I'm here, and they can call any time. I've never turned any request down."

Nick Calabrese, a 1984 graduate of Penn's Management Technology Program, is testimony to Rosen's understated persuasiveness.

"I had been applying to other Ivy League schools," says Calabrese, now an associate oil analyst with Atlantic Richfield Company in California. "But the enthusiasm Hum showed and the general warmth he displayed made Penn my first choice. The warmth is so important: You're a high school senior—you think you're being scrutinized, so you're nervous.

"Hum also was well briefed on me, and that was impressive. At some of the other schools I applied to, I was just another applicant. He was always there for everyone, not just for me. I was an average applicant, but thanks to Hum I felt special."

And thanks to Hum Rosen, Calabrese adds, "I'm getting involved in alumni work out here, doing some interviewing. I want to give back some of what Hum gave me."

As for Rosen, he plans to continue helping Penn find the best students —and helping students find their way to Penn.

"I've thought occasionally that it's about time I turned this work over to someone else," he says, smiling. "I expected to do that this year, but—" he gestures eloquently at his desk, which is full of Penn literature and student interview forms.

"I hope to keep doing this as long as I'm able. If I thought I was getting out of tune with the kids, I'd stop."

That seems unlikely, based on Rosen's rave reviews from satisfied customers. And with his phone ringing at least two or three times a day with questions from students and parents, it appears Rosen may not be allowed to stop doing what he does so well—personalizing the admission process for future Penn students. cnsa

Why Redlands?

Alumni help prospects answer that question
by Merilyn H. Bonney

Alumni have traditionally been good recruiters of students for the University of Redlands, a private liberal arts institution. Until recent years, however, it was not necessary to direct time or money towards mobilizing this resource. But with the numbers of college-age students declining, we needed to increase student recruitment efforts. It became essential to organize a body of enthusiastic, reliable alumni to help.

In the early 1970s, the alumni staff and board began laying the groundwork for an alumni recruitment effort. By 1976, members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors had designated alumni involvement in student recruitment as its top priority. They formalized the Redlands Admissions Assistance Program (RAAP) and set the following goals:

- Identify more talented prospective students.
- Increase the pool of applicants.
- Increase the number of qualified students admitted to U of R.

Once we had drawn up the program goals, we figured out just what our RAAP program should do—and how:

1. *Encourage alumni to identify themselves as U of R graduates.* It is our policy gently to remind alumni to include their affiliation with Redlands in their dossiers, press releases, and social and business conversations. Alumni receive the reminders in publications, at gatherings, and in personal contacts.

2. *Encourage alumni to promote U of R to high school-aged children of friends and relatives.* At all U of R gatherings, we try to sensitize alumni to the decline in applications. We remind them to share their Redlands experience with prospective students.

3. *Encourage children of alumni to attend Redlands.* Typically, there are approximately 150 children of alumni on campus. In the past, we had done little to recruit alumni children, but beginning in 1977, we have used several techniques to reach this market:

- Alumni Founders Day 1977 had a special component for alumni children; approximately 25 prospective students participated.
- We sent a letter to every alumni parent thanking him or her for passing on the "Redlands Tradition."
- When an alumni relative applied to Redlands, we immediately sent a thank-you letter to the alumnus/a.
- Alumni Founders Day 1978 offered an opportunity for appointments with admissions counselors.
- Special invitations went to alumni children for events such as Alumni Tennis Clinic, John Raitt Receptions, the Hollywood Bowl, and World Team Tennis events.

4. *Encourage alumni to familiarize associates in secondary education with U of R.* We mentioned this idea in a letter to volunteers and in the RAAP handbook.

5. *Get Redlands alumni who teach in secondary education involved with RAAP.* As the program began, we ordered a printout of alumni in secondary and community college education. Letters went to all these people. Those who responded formed the initial nucleus of the program. They have subsequently taken part in hosting "Discover Redlands" programs and in the telephone follow-up phase of the program.

6. *Organize informational meetings for prospective students and their parents in alumni homes.* In late fall, the dean of admissions and alumni director determined the geographical area for these informational meetings, entitled "Discover Redlands." The alumni director then selected host families. About four weeks before each program, the admissions office sent invitations to all the prospective students in the area. The enclosed return cards enabled the alumni director to notify the hosts of the expected number of guests. Redlands has found that most students bring a parent or friend.

Two weeks before a program, the admissions counselor assigned to the evening invites a current student (preferably from the same geographical area as the host family) and a faculty member to participate. These representatives arrive at the hosts' home at least a half hour before the program begins.

The program focuses on a multimedia production. The evening begins with introductions by the alumni staff representative. Then there are brief comments by the admissions counselor. The multimedia production is next, followed by comments by the faculty member and students.

U of R urges hosting alumni to interject their personal experiences. Often, the warmth of these recollections becomes the high point of the evening. Then there is a brief question and answer period, followed by informal refreshments. U of R representatives concentrate on making sure that each guest receives individual attention.

The RAAP multimedia production was the inspiration and creation of Jack B. Cummings, vice president for university and alumni relations at Redlands. For a relatively small investment ($2,500) and perhaps 400 hours of his time, we had a warm, moving, fast-paced show ready to take on the road. Currently, we use the show more than 50 times a year. To keep it up to date, we change it annually.

The show is liberal-arts oriented. It features several departments, many extracurricular activities, prominent campus personalities, and dozens of magnificant campus shots.

The 22-minute production, "Why Redlands," attempts to answer the question: Why should a prospective student select the University of Redlands? Audiences consistently receive it with enthusiasm.

After the original hardware investment, it has become an inexpensive communications tool. We transferred the original show to cassette which can be shown on a "Viewcorder." Now staffers can more easily transport it. The show lost some musical quality in the process, but the cassette approach works better overall.

7. *Use a network of alumni throughout the U.S. to make encouraging follow-up phone calls to admitted students.* Beginning in early spring each year, the admissions office sends a weekly list of admitted students to the alumni office. We match these students with alumni volunteers by ZIP codes. A letter then goes to the

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alumnus with the name, address, and phone number of the student. We ask the alumnus/a to call the student and encourage him or her to attend U of R. We suggest a format for the telephone conversation. The university provides stamped, addressed cards for feedback on the students' reactions. When the alumnus/a returns the card, the university sends him or her a thank-you letter.

8. *Develop a handbook.* We studied admissions handbooks from other schools, incorporated some ideas from them, and developed a resource of current information. Our handbook goes to RAAP volunteers, to alumni board members, and to university trustees.

We used 165 alumni for the telephone follow-up phase of RAAP. Two-thirds of these alumni volunteered; the others were recruits. Collectively, they contacted 228 prospective students. The retention rate of RAAP volunteers is excellent, particularly for those who host "Discover Redlands" programs.

The admissions and alumni staffs noted with pride a 5 percent increase in applications from the fall of 1976 to the fall of 1977. Also, the number of students entering in fall 1977 was up 12 percent. Our efforts in 1978 have been similarly rewarding, and several letters have said that the alumni contact made *the* difference in a student's decision to attend Redlands.

In the early stages, I played a major role in recruiting volunteers. I also organized program format, wrote promotional materials, and attended the "Discover Redlands" programs.

However, an exceptionally talented student employee was able to handle all geographical pairing for the telephone follow-up phase. As the program entered its second year, this student assumed total responsibility for all aspects except "Discover Redlands."

In addition, she coordinated the production of the handbook and added a section that explains curricular changes. The alumni program coordinator, an expert on multimedia shows, provided additional program assistance.

We find this program an exceptional way to encourage alumni service. It yields significant long- and short-term benefits to the university. The short-term effects are these: The administration is pleased with the increased number of students. Faculty concerned with attracting students of high quality value the alumni assistance. Parents of prospective students are grateful for personal contact. And the alumni involved feel a renewed enthusiasm and commitment to the university.

We feel the long-term effects are even more significant. Alumni selected to participate feel special because they are told they are among the most outstanding products of the university. Previously uninvolved young alumni now serve U of R. All participants have become better informed about the university. And this understanding has helped to increase financial and legislative support, and to improve leadership on alumni boards and in clubs.

(In the 1978 CASE Recognition competition, this program won an exceptional achievement award in the Alumni Service-to-Institution category.—ED.) case

Training Alumnae to Attract Students

by Kay Chaney Harris

Anyone who has dealt with admissions knows that alumnae assistance can be either a great help or an enormous headache. With an alumnae constituency of 40,000, Stephens College decided to investigate the benefits of an organized alumnae admissions program for the purpose of boosting a declining enrollment.

So we investigated. We reorganized and trained our alumnae admissions advisers, and now, after nearly two years of administration, we can see the positive results of our work.

We are pleased that the number of inquiries from prospective students has doubled since the project began, and an overall (residential and University Without Walls) enrollment increase this fall tends to justify our efforts further. The next step will be to translate more of the inquiries into actual applications for admission.

Kay Chaney Harris, now Kay Chaney Nadel, formerly director of alumni relations at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, is now president of C-N Communications, Inc., a marketing, advertising, and public relations firm in New York City.

Objectives

To provide direction to the Alumnae Admissions Program, we established the following objectives:

1. to increase the pool of inquiries and applicants to Stephens;
2. to provide a local contact for students who indicated an interest in attending Stephens;
3. to increase alumnae awareness of their potential to attract students to Stephens;
4. to help applicants to the college matriculate; and
5. to provide help to the associate directors of admissions (professional admissions representatives).

With these objectives in mind, we decided to expand the number of alumnae admissions advisers from 50 to approximately 1,000 active, informed alumnae. To do this, we developed a highly organized system.

Attracting participants

The success of any volunteer program depends on the willingness of those involved to participate. We sent an initial letter to alumnae who had graduated from 1948 to 1974 and who lived in selected states. We asked them to return an enclosed card if they were interested in becoming involved. The response was overwhelming.

Letters are only one way to attract participants. The associate directors of admissions are of invaluable help in discovering alumnae willing to join in our efforts. Members of the faculty and administration who travel for college public relations purposes are also instrumental in recruiting alumnae.

Any alumna who volunteers the name of a prospective student is automatically contacted to see if she would like to become involved. In short, discovering willing, enthusiastic alumnae is the easiest step.

Training sessions

It is more harmful to spread misinformation about the college than to provide no information. In order to avoid this problem, we hold training sessions. We pick areas where 30 or more interested alumnae live. We also consider whether the area has a large potential for prospective students, a substantial number of alumnae, and fewer applicants than anticipated.

After organizing the reply cards geographically, we send personal invitations to the training sessions. We avoid the use of college stationery or the Addressograph and use instead an attractive note-size, personalized invitation.

A central location and scheduling the sessions at night help to draw alumnae. Although sessions are occasionally held at an alumna's home, we prefer hotel conference rooms because they provide a more favorable work atmosphere. Training sessions must not be social sessions.

The director of the program conducts all sessions, which are divided into two parts: a description of the college as it now exists, and the specifics of the Alumnae Admissions Program. A knowledge of curriculum changes is important to alumnae who may have been away from the college for years.

Also of prime importance is an updating on residential student life. Current campus rules or lack of rules often prompts questions and may prevent some alumnae from participating in the program if they do not fully understand the reasons behind the changes. We try to predict the kinds of issues that will be raised, and then approach them candidly.

Contacting students

All alumnae admissions advisers are asked to accept three responsibilities. First, they must actively search for potential students. We discuss every conceivable source for finding capable students, and each adviser is asked to find two per year. Second, they contact, preferably by phone, any students from their area who have indicated an interest in Stephens. We convey to them names of such students on prospective student contact forms. Third, advisers keep catalogs and curriculum brochures in high schools and other public places, and they circulate college slides—we've purchased a set for each major city.

Perhaps a word should be said about the type of alumna who will be most successful in talking with prospective students. The alumna must have a strong loyalty to the college and must feel that the college provided her with an educational experience that she could not have obtained anywhere else. She must feel that the college is meeting the needs of contemporary women. In general, recent graduates have greater success talking to students. But we do not discriminate because of age—we have many grandmothers successfully participating in the program.

At the end of the training session, each alumna is asked if she will commit herself to the program. Each adviser who joins the program receives a *Sourcebook,* college catalog, and descriptive brochures. If an alumna does not have time to participate just then, we invite her to join later. Similarly, if an alumna joins the program and later finds her time is limited, she is relieved of her duties. We try to replace her—the adviser herself often suggests a successor. She can then help train the new adviser until another formal session is held in that city.

The *Sourcebook*

The *Sourcebook,* the official guide for alumnae admissions advisers, is our most important means of communication. The hard-bound, loose-leaf notebook is very practical.

The most important section of the *Sourcebook* is "What's New at Stephens?" When new programs are added or significant events take place, we send an informative addition to each adviser. The chapters are color-

coded for ease in organization.

Communications network

When a prospective student inquires about Stephens, her name is sent to an admissions adviser. We provide each adviser with a numerical listing of ZIP codes in her own state and ask her to check those areas in which she is willing to confer with prospective students.

After receiving a student's name, the adviser contacts her within two weeks and offers to answer any questions. After filling out the report form, the adviser keeps one copy for her records and forwards the remaining copies to Stephens. The copy for our records reveals which advisers are active.

Providing personal contact on a local basis is the best aspect of the program. In this computer era, our potential students find it refreshing to be treated in a personal way.

A key person, the area coordinator, divides major cities into high school districts. With as many as 40 alumnae admissions advisers in some large cities, it becomes impossible for either the college or the associate director of admissions to maintain efficient contact. The area coordinators assist in our overall communications network, and lead the local group in sponsoring prospective student events. We regularly conduct special training sessions for area coordinators.

Another communications device is the supply form and suggestion sheets placed in the back of the *Sourcebook*. These forms allow the adviser to check the items that she needs, as well as allowing room for her to "sound off." Prompt response by the office of alumnae relations is essential.

Keeping alumnae up to date

Training the admissions adviser is only the first step in developing alumnae who can contribute to the admissions effort. Keeping them aware of new programs and changes is also vital.

The annual Alumnae Seminar is an opportune time to motivate and encourage advisers. We have initiated five regional conferences in various areas of the country to train and educate all alumnae, especially alumnae admissions advisers

Summary and evaluation

Our membership in the Alumnae Admissions Program has gone from 50 to over 800 advisers in one year. We are developing an International Alumnae Admissions Program, as well as training May graduates prior to their leaving campus.

The program must be a campus project. Cooperation from students, faculty, staff, and administrators is of tremendous importance.

It is too early to evaluate this program statistically, but plans are now in effect to compare the differences in numbers of inquiries and applicants. We believe that this study will indicate significant increases. At any rate, we know that the opportunities available to young women at Stephens have been communicated to many alumnae.

(It has been nearly 10 years since this article was first published. By 1982, the program had grown so much that there was not sufficient professional staff to manage it adequately. At that point, the formal program was unfortunately dissolved, and any assistance from alumnae was done on an individual basis. At the spring 1985 Alumnae Association board meeting, it was agreed to reinstate the Alumnae Admissions Program at Stephens College. Restructuring of the program is now in progress.—Judy Redies Uerling, Director of Admissions, Stephens College.) cnls

Section 6

Publications: Communicating Frankly and Effectively

Mission: Improvement

Translating college marketing strategies into recruitment publications that work

by Sandra L. Zerby and Kevin J. Manning

When we decided to adopt new marketing strategies at Elizabethtown College, we discovered that publications were a good starting point for planning. What's more, early in the publications process we discovered that each new publications strategy gave birth to still another marketing strategy.

Our publications overhaul actually began in 1976 when a new director of admissions decided to try the marketing approach to improve our eroding enrollments, dropping freshman SAT scores, and mounting deficits. This new approach eventually touched all aspects of our admissions office, from the order in which we contact prospects to the look, focus, and content of our recruitment literature.

Like all newcomers to marketing, we first did research and analysis to determine where Elizabethtown stood. This analysis made us realize that we didn't know enough about our students, what brought them to our campus, and what kept them there. So, under the guidance of a sociology professor with extensive market research experience, we designed a survey questionnaire and discovered that:

- The college was relatively unknown, even in its own county, as a result of its traditionally low-key approach to promotion.
- Because of its name, many prospects assumed that Elizabethtown was a women's college.
- Few prospects and high school guidance counselors were fully aware of the many advantages of the college's location. (We're close to state and federal capitals, major business and industry, and many environmental and natural resources.)
- A limited number of people in our admissions audience knew about the quality of our faculty and curriculum.
- Our admissions literature didn't always address the factors of greatest interest to prospects and their parents, factors such as academic programs and financial aid.
- We weren't attracting enough inquiries to generate an incoming class of 500 or more.

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How we changed

This research showed that we had our work cut out for us. Our publications were a logical starting point.

One of our first moves was to design a family resemblance so that all our folders and booklets could "piggyback" on the graphic impact of their predecessors. Because today's prospects have been reared in an era of color television, we incorporated many more photographs in general and color photographs in particular into the literature. We took special pains to ensure that the photos were an accurate reflection of both the character of Elizabethtown's people and their daily activities (including the fact that men make up a substantial part of the student body).

Our copy also took on a new slant. Rewritten into second person, it echoed the informality and friendliness of the campus. And we avoided generalities as much as possible. For example, instead of merely saying, "As an Elizabethtown student, you may have the opportunity to work with professors on their personal research," we described several specific cases in which students have worked with professors on highly technical research projects.

Eventually, we overhauled all our admissions publications, investing in professional design, more vigorous copy, and higher quality printing. To remedy the problems our early market research uncovered, we went into great detail about the quality of our faculty, the depth and variety of courses, and our diverse athletic and cultural offerings.

Publications as building blocks

Each new marketing strategy gave birth to yet another marketing strategy. Revamping our publications led us to develop a publications flow system that ensures that our literature goes out to prospects in a logical sequence.

This plan, in turn, led to a communications flow system that schedules all mailings and telephone contacts from the day the college receives an inquiry until the prospect matriculates.

Because we sometimes mail literature to as many as 15,000 prospects monthly, we also looked into office automation technology. To add to the capacity of our campus computer, we purchased some computer hardware exclusively for the admissions office. Now we enter critical data in each student's file so that the admissions staff can target specific groups with specific mailings.

Our efforts didn't end there. We expanded our marketing area. We enlisted alumni, students, and faculty in providing us with further names and addresses of prospective students. And, through the public relations office, we extended our exposure in the mass media.

Carrying out many of these marketing and publications strategies required the cooperation of a variety of the college's constituencies. Before we could get their cooperation, however, we often had to work to change some attitudes. For example, before the recruitment turnaround, the faculty members were skeptical and reluctant to participate in recruitment.

To overcome their resistance, our admissions counselors went from one academic department to another, learning more about each discipline and getting the professors' views of what to emphasize in promoting their fields. We also surveyed professors on their opinions of our new publications as they came out.

When faculty members realized that the admissions staff was truly interested in them and their work, the admissions effort won new credibility. Today most of our professors go out of their way to submit names of prospects and talk to prospects who visit the campus. They also collaborate in editing or rewriting the copy for the

academic discipline folders, participate in open houses, and make calls to exceptional prospects.

Of course, the faculty is only one constituency. Now everyone—faculty, administration, staff, students, and alumni—has a hand in turning admissions objectives into college objectives.

The results

The outcome of our new program has been more than satisfactory. In the seven years since our turnaround began, Elizabethtown has enrolled the three largest classes in its 84-year history.

On July 1, 1983, we'd already broken the recruitment records we'd set in 1982. For the 1983-84 recruitment year, inquiries were up 24 percent, applications increased by 10 percent, and the number of matriculants was 494. Average freshman SAT scores increased 18 points. And our recruitment record has helped to attract various gifts and grants—one in the six-figure category—to the development office.

We haven't reached—and never will—the point of perfection in our publications plan. But while we're refining our old plan and setting goals for new marketing plans, we'll have the flexibility we need to meet the challenges of the future. CASE

Jargon & Zippeedoo

Some notes on good writing for recruitment
by Robert J. Armbruster

The major problems with most writing for recruitment seem to me to be:

- too many words, and pages, and publications;
- too many superlatives and too much bragging (and sometimes lying);
- absence of any felt need to grab the reader, and, instead, an assumption of avid reader interest; and,
- probably most important today, refusal to walk the tightrope between dignified, academic language (jargon) and the new marketing lingo that the experts tell us is necessary to maintain or increase enrollments.

We seem confronted quite often by a choice between copy that's boring, boring, boring, and copy that's a rival for a dogfood commercial—or more accurately a sand-and-sea resort commercial.

As the first sentence of a recruiting catalog, which is worse?

"Williamsville's outstanding teachers seek to impart knowledge in a multiplicity of experiences—intellectual, social, psychological, and developmental—which not only will shape and discipline inquisitive and sophisticated minds, but will inspire sensitivity to human life and activity in an age of technology and bureaucracy increasingly devoid of ethical discernment."

Or "Of course there's always the freedom to do what you will at Warrington, when you want to do it: the freedom to roam at will over 450 acres of green and rolling campus. The freedom to seek out that favorite spot next to the lake, or back in the tall grasses, or over there amidst the wild flowers and untouched greenery. The freedom [no comma] in other words, to be yourself, to watch yourself growing day-by-day in mind and spirit."

The problem with both the stiff academic approach and the zippeedoo advertising approach is that they're just too easy—and the reader senses it. Neither academic cliches nor ad talk requires much familiarity with an institution, or much thought. The writer assumes a readership and refuses to try to be just plain interesting and informative. Readers appreciate effort on their behalf.

A study by College Board researchers indicates that most high school students receiving Search mailings from colleges equate a college's willingness to be candid with quality. They're easily turned off by institutions that brag incessantly or refuse to acknowledge a weakness. Convincing admissions officers of the need for the new marketing lingo seems to be a lot easier than convincing them of the need for credibility.

In publication after publication, a prospective student can read how much this or that college cares about him or her. Well, according to the ads, colleges aren't the only ones:

"Jerry's Chevrolet cares about you."

"Sears Optical Department: Trust Us, We Care About You."

"Maryland's Diet Program Cares About You."

Another fairly recent difficulty is the belief of dyed-in-the-wool consumer advocates that if a 185-page catalog was sufficient in the past, then what's needed today is a 400-pager with details on everything—including the number of doorknobs a student would have to turn to go from his or her dorm to a class on the third floor of the biology building.

One of about a dozen paragraphs describing the student union at one college reads: "The Recreation Center is located on the first floor of the University Union and is divided into two central areas of recreational activity. The Billiards Area, located in the upper level [no comma] provides an extensive variety of leisure entertainment in the form of activities ranging from billiards and table tennis to coin-operated air-hockey and amusement machines. The Bowling Lane Area, located in the lower level, is equipped with eight American Bowling Congress approved lanes and a snack bar." Who could possibly care?

Another college's fine publications director managed to pare her institution's catalog down to 64 pages, but her achievement gave the admissions director cause to tremble rather than celebrate. He feared that prospective students would feel they weren't getting something substantial enough. So much for brevity as an ingredient of good writing. No college with fewer than 5,000 students needs a catalog longer than 64 pages.

With pieces smaller than catalogs—posters, self-mailers or introductory folders, and viewbooks—colleges should recognize that these are basically advertisements. Ads don't tell you the whole story of a product or a service or an institution. They're intended to catch and hold a reader's interest

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briefly, and get that reader to take some action—send for more information or file an application.

The tendency to go with length rather than brevity is part insecurity and part arrogance. We fill our promotion pieces with claims that we're unique in this way or that. Except for high school students who are considering only the college down the street, they're all receiving literature from several institutions. So why act as if interdisciplinary programs, internships, 24 different major fields(!), counseling services, and placement offices are unique to your college? They may rate a mention but surely each doesn't deserve a page or more to itself.

Underlying all the recurring faults in recruitment writing is the preference most institutions seem to have for generalizations rather than specifics. Specifics are harder to come by than generalizations, but they're far more effective in terms of reader response. And the best specifics any college has to offer are its people—the students, faculty, and alumni.

The last three pages of a prospectus from Emory College present photographs and very brief—but enormously revealing—quotations from a dozen faculty members. And these tell more about Emory than pages of verbiage about goals and purposes and commitments to excellence ever could.

Likewise, a booklet from Bradford College entitled "Of what use is a liberal education at a school like Bradford if you're going into a career?" That booklet is comprised of 11 alumni profiles—each a page or more long but intriguing and human and believable. It has to be an effective recruiting piece for the college.

(Ironically, the same College Board study mentioned above indicates that prospective students aren't the slightest bit interested in reading about alumni; they just want to know about today's students.)

There are an unlimited number of effective ways to communicate with prospective students. (I'd like, for example, to see a college do all of its direct mail promotions by way of letters—no publications whatsoever.) Unfortunately there is no sure-fire approach that can be used to the exclusion of all others. And no ironclad taboos such as alumni profiles. Honesty, brevity, directness, and a reliance on specifics ought to be central to any approach. Beyond that, how to write successful recruiting material is anybody's guess. **cnte**

Communicate Through Catalogs

(Whenever we mention a catalog in CURRENTS, *the author receives hundreds of queries and/or requests for copies. The reason: Just about everybody wants to find out how to print a more effective catalog for less.*

No wonder. At most colleges, it eats up a lion's share of the publications budget. And if the catalog is a recruiting piece, its success or failure has a major impact on enrollment.

More and more institutions are switching to a combination of a prospectus or viewbook and an academic catalog, chiefly for on-campus distribution. Others are cutting costs by changing format, printing process, or frequency of publication.

We can't say what's best for your institution, but here are some suggestions on how to make your catalog more effective. And we've added notes on some innovative formats plus a word about a helpful catalog survey.—Virginia L. Carter.)

LISTEN TO YOUR AUDIENCE

For three years now, we at the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) have been getting audience feedback on your recruitment materials. Specifically, we've been asking panels of high school seniors, college freshmen, and guidance counselors gathered at different locations throughout the country to evaluate your wares.

Through the CEEB-CASE Campus to Prospective Students recognition program, about 100 institutions have submitted their total recruitment communications packages. These include not only publications but also audio-visual presentations, ads, spots, films, and so forth.

While the students and counselors have been evaluating, I've been listening. I believe that what they've said can help you.

In these three years, the opinions and reactions seem to follow a pattern. These student comments are typical:

Information is clear and concise and gives one a feel for the college as well as the facts.

This institution was very forward and frank in its information. I wouldn't mind going there myself because I got a crystal-clear view of everything I needed to know. That's important.

Much consideration (research, evaluation, economy) seems to be given to the materials. They are simplistic (no great variety) but do give a clear picture.

The fact that this university has its students very actively involved in its communications program makes college-bound students look more seriously at the school. It implies a more intimate atmosphere that students look for in a college.

Materials are very attractive and thorough; they reflect a school with concern for its students.

Straightforward, does not try to kid anybody, a very impressive institution.

There are some words to note in those quotes: "clear," "concise," "facts," "frank," "students actively involved," "research," "evaluation," "attractive," "thorough," "not try to kid anybody."

Let's not kid ourselves. Students today have a serious attitude toward higher education and certain expectations about the materials they should get from colleges. Even though their SAT scores may be falling, they are media-wise and generally bright and sophisticated. They are not likely to be fooled by Madison Avenue gimmickry.

From our experience, the recipe for a good communications program seems to be this: Remember who your readers are and communicate to and

for *them*. Don't address the president or the alumni or the trustees or the faculty. Do your homework. Research what your audience needs and wants.

Mix a functional design with a straightfoward message. Avoid busyness, clutter, inconsistency. Pencil out educational gobbledegook. Make the writing clear, the sentences short; but don't talk down to your audience. Use illustrations of good quality and with an emphasis on people.

Be honest and frank. Coordinate your communications—give students information when they need it most.

Give a well-rounded picture of your institution: its academic program, students, campus learning and living style, and career options. Meet the specific needs for information on financial aid, ethnic studies, transfer, credit by examination, and careers. And, most of all, involve students in the communications process.—*Carol P. Halstead, formerly director of public information, College Entrance Examination Board, is now president of College Connections, a public relations consulting firm in New York City that works with educational, health, and other nonprofit organizations.*

MIRROR YOUR INSTITUTION

A very successful annual report designer created publications that invariably met with approval and acclaim. His designs were varied and distinctive. Some were *avant garde*—broad splashes of color, contemporary typography, dynamic photos. Others were traditional—old-style paper, soft colors, subtle photographs.

Asked about his success, he said the formula was simple. When commissioned to design an annual report, he would meet with the company president. At that meeting, he would note the president's clothes, office furnishings, the pictures on the walls, the texture and pattern of the rug. From this, the designer would decide what approach to take with the report: contemporary, traditional, bold, soft, dynamic, quiet, aggressive, or reserved.

Every school, college, or university provides a similar fount of information for the astute designer, writer, or publications staff member. The architectural style conveys a mood or feeling. The terrain of the campus produces psychological effects. Is it heavily treed, largely open, or spread over rolling hills? Is the campus in a city or in a quiet New England town?

The people on campus reveal its character. On one campus, students may be enrolled in esoteric programs while on another they may concentrate on more career-oriented courses. The curriculum tells a lot about academic aspirations and concentrations. The psychological mood is also important. Is the atmosphere leisurely or rushed, casual or formal?

You can translate these details into a cohesive total that represents your school, college, or university. Even the lead paragraph in a catalog or viewbook can establish the institution's concerns, philosophy, and ideals. You do this not only in what you say but how you say it.

You should select photographs for the catalog to ensure that the total impression accurately, carefully, and thoughtfully represents the whole institution. Just as each stone in a mosaic contributes to the total picture, each catalog photograph contributes to the total representation of your campus.

In selecting photographs, you and/or your designer can program the visual pace that reflects the place.

As the writer, you can even more effectively set up psychological interpretation. After all, your materials—words—incorporate all the nuances of the language. The pace of words, sentences, and thoughts can mirror the feel of the institution.

It's important for a publication to reflect accurately the institution, whether the reader scans the information or reads it in detail. In the same way, an ad for the local newspaper should easily be identified with the institution by its layout, shape, appearance, and typography as well as by its content and logo. Institutions, like individuals, are known by their differences.

Erratic, unrelated approaches to publications confuse your audiences. By contrast, a comprehensive publications program can provide the identification that fosters successful communication. In an effective publications program, individual pieces contribute toward the total. Development pieces relate to admissions; alumni publications to advertising, catalogs, and viewbooks. Slide shows should be compatible in look and message. Even campus visual elements such as signs should relate to publications.

It's helpful to talk with administrators, faculty, staff, and students in order to define the characteristics that represent your institution. Look around. You'll be amazed at the information you'll find. Then it's your job to translate this into printing, words, typography, color, layout, and photography.—*Robert S. Topor, formerly director of university publications, Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, is now director of marketing communications at Sharp Health System in San Diego, California.*

IMPROVE COPY AND PICTURES

At Bethany, we consider the catalog to be the heart of our student recruitment materials. We think that it is the one publication that prospective students depend on most for authoritative information about the college.

Bethany is small, private, church-related, liberal arts oriented, and dedicated to teaching rather than to research. The college is not highly visible outside our area of West Virginia. Yet we draw 90 percent of our students from out of state. Our recruitment area is centered in 10 northeastern states, not in West Virginia or even the Upper Ohio Valley.

As a result, we reach many prospective students for the first time through our publications—often the catalog in the guidance counselor's office. It is vital that this be an imaginative, stimulating piece. The catalog must serve as the next best thing to a conversation with a Bethany admissions counselor or a visit to campus.

When we began to redesign the catalog, we decided to speak in our copy directly to prospective students—not to the president, registrar, or dean of faculty. And we wanted our catalog to be visually exciting. We thought this was the surest way to make a lasting impression on the 17-year-old. From a publication with almost no pictures, we moved to a 160-page catalog with about 125 pictures.

We went to considerable effort to get top-quality photographs. We needed more and better shots than those provided by our in-house photographer and students. To solve the problem, we brought in a free-lancer who is now our primary source of creative photography.

Three days a year—in the fall, winter, and spring—we invite this per-

son to campus. I map out his agenda well in advance. Then the photographer and I walk from one end of the campus to the other. At the end of the day's shooting, we're both exhausted. But the results are worth it, and we recommend this approach to you.

In planning our catalog, we realized that it needed to be totally rewritten. The old book was a montage of styles of countless deans and professors.

We started over. And we questioned certain assumptions. Did the catalog have to start with a detailed history of the institution? Did we have to describe every campus building? Did we have to list every endowed fund? Our answer was no—not if we wanted a better catalog.

Finally, we decided to lead off with a mini-viewbook—a freshly written statement about Bethany. With this copy, we ran our best photographs to give young readers a lively introduction to the college.

The remainder of our catalog covers college life, admission, expenses and financial aid, the academic program, course descriptions, and a directory that lists all students. (We include the latter list to show the cosmopolitan nature of our student body.) Bold subheads break up each chapter. These improve the look of the book and help readers find information quickly.

Faculty members write the course descriptions, which come to me for final editing. I check for conciseness, style consistency, accuracy, and quality of writing. This editing process helps make all copy hang together.

We are convinced of the value of course descriptions. When many colleges for budget reasons are going to brief admissions catalogs for off-campus distribution, we feel that they help set our catalog apart.

In designing our book, we decided to break with the traditional 6 x 9". We settled on a contemporary 8½ x 8½" size. It's large enough to stand out on the guidance counselor's shelf and to give us flexibility in our page layouts—plus lots of white space. Our goal was a straightforward, clean design to complement what we hoped was clear, concise, interesting copy.

We had such success with the square catalog format that we have since used it for two other admissions publications: a 7 x 7" direct mail package and a 9½ x 9½" general introductory piece.

A word of caution about catalogs: Remember that your catalog may be considered a contractual document by the courts. Don't let your promotional tendencies carry you too far afield. Write truthfully and be prepared to defend what you say.

Also, be aware of the Internal Revenue Service's technical information release # 1417 of November 6, 1975. It states in Section 4.02 that "every school must include a statement of its racially nondiscriminatory policy as to students in all its brochures and catalogs dealing with student admissions, programs, and scholarships." Failure to comply threatens your institution, on audit, with loss of its tax-exempt status.—*Charles Aldrich, formerly director of public information and publications at Bethany College in West Virginia, is now vice president at Kell and Company, an advertising agency in Silver Spring, Maryland.* CASE

(For more information about catalogs, see CASE's The Complete College Catalog Book. *It's available from the CASE Publications Order Department, 80 S. Early St., Alexandria, VA 22304, for $16.50 prepaid, includes shipping.)*

Reach Students Effectively

Some notes on college mailings
by Barry Druesne and Mary Zavada

Use of the Student Search Service by colleges to communicate with college-bound students has increased dramatically since the service began in 1971-72. In 1975-76, approximately 700 colleges participated in Student Search, received the names of approximately 1.5 million prospective college students, and sent millions of pieces of mail to them.

Colleges involved in the program have frequently asked Student Search staff such questions as: What rates of student response to mailings are institutions experiencing? Are some types of materials more effective than others in eliciting student response? Do the editorial and graphic qualities of the materials sent to the students influence rates of response? What do students think of the mailings?

In an attempt to answer these and other questions, Student Search staff conducted several studies. During the summer of 1975, all the colleges and scholarship agencies that had used Student Search since it began were surveyed and asked to indicate, among other factors, the rates of student response they had experienced from their mailings. This study was extended, in the summer of 1976, to an analysis of the relationship between the editorial and graphic quality of a large sample of college mailings and their rates of response. In the winter of 1976-77, program and editorial staff met with current high school seniors who had received printed material from colleges using the Student Search Service to assess their reactions to the mailings they had received.

Barry Druesne, formerly associate program director, Student Search Service, is now program director of the College-Level Examination Program of the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. Mary Zavada, formerly director, Program Editorial Services of the College Board, is now director of press relations at the Insurance Institute in New York City.

Rates of student response

The summer 1975 survey provided some interesting results on the rates of response Search participants had experienced. Using the data supplied by the colleges that reported they had done studies of the rates of response from their mailings, we learned that the First Spring Search produced the highest rate of initial response (that is, returning a card, requesting additional information, and so on), but the Summer Search produced a higher rate of actual student applications.

The median rate of initial response for the First Spring Search was 9.4 percent as opposed to 4.8 percent for the Summer Search and 4.3 percent for the Winter Search. In contrast, the median rate of application was 2 percent for the Summer Search, 1.8 percent for the First Spring Search, and 1.6 percent for the Winter Search.

(There are two Spring Searches, the first being the largest pool of names of students from most states. The Second Spring Search contains the names of students who were not selected or selected only once in the First Spring Search.—ED.)

Because the name of a Student Search staff member is automatically included in each set of student names requested by an institution, we were able to compare the rates of student response experienced by 186 colleges with the mailings they had sent to the students. We found that student response is much higher if the materials students receive point out that they are the ones they requested. Students indicated their willingness to participate in Student Search when they took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) or when they registered to take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). For example 17.5 percent of the mailings mentioning Student Search, the SAT, or the PSAT/NMSQT received a 15 percent or higher rate of initial response as opposed to 7.8 percent of the mailings that did not mention the program or tests. Apparently, if the students understand that the material was sent to them because they asked to receive it, they pay more attention to it than they do to material from colleges and universities that seems to be unsolicited.

Further, most of the mailings were either special curriculum mailings (that is, mailings that described a specific curriculum such as biology and that were sent to students who indicated an interest in that area of study) or general mailings (that is, mailings that described the entire institution). We found that special curriculum mailings tended to be more effective than the general mailings.

Some 22.6 percent of 31 special curriculum mailings produced a 15 percent or higher rate of return compared to 8.4 percent of 131 general mailings. It seems reasonable to assume that the more closely the mailings match the students' interests, the more inclined they are to respond to them.

Postage rate impact

We also found that materials sent by first-class postage produced a higher rate of response than material mailed at other postal rates. For example, 23.4 percent of the mailings sent at the first-class postage rate produced a 15 percent or higher rate of initial response in contrast to 10.3 percent of the mailings sent at a nonprofit rate.

Our study of the relationship between the editorial and graphic quality and rate of response provided some additional insights into factors affecting the rate of response. In this study, we first sorted the 186 mailings according to their rates of response—for example, those that produced a 15 percent or higher rate, those that produced a 12 to 14 percent rate, and so on down to those that produced a 0 to 2 percent rate of response. Next, we examined the mailings within each percentage group for striking similarities or differences. Finally, we compared our findings across percentage groups.

Editorial and graphic qualities

These comparisons confirmed that the editorial and graphic quality of the material did influence the rate of response. Generally, it was apparent that the least successful mailings had too little information, too much information, confusing information, or a patronizing attitude, particularly toward blacks or women. A number of the least successful mailings also had small, virtually unreadable type, cluttered layouts, and a few had been poorly printed. Reading through the material, we found that some mailings that included pamphlets, letters, and promotional pieces gave no indication of what to read first.

What characterized the mailings with the highest response rates was the effectiveness of communicating what attending a certain college was like. On the whole, these materials were direct, thorough, and spirited. Moreover, they were consistent in tone and genuinely sympathetic to student concerns.

However, among the 186 mailings we did find a few with a relatively high response rate that did not seem to be models of student-directed literature and a few with a low response rate that appeared readable, attractive, and vital. We were also struck by the fact that the liberal arts college of one university sent out a mailing identical to that of its engineering school, but the former had a response rate several percentage points higher than the latter. We concluded that, in cases like these, factors other than the editorial and graphic quality of the mailings were critical.

With both the results of the surveys and the editorial and graphic study in hand, we met with a group of current high school seniors who had received more than 50 mailings from Student Search institutional participants. We identified these students by using Student Search Service records.

Most of the students came to the meeting with examples of mailings that had interested them—as well as some to which they had reacted negatively. What they told us largely coincided with the opinions and conclusions we had come to on our own.

Two of the mailings that appealed to the students—even though none of them had a previous interest in the institutions that had sent them—were those from Pitzer College and Grinnell College. The students commended Pitzer's six-page folder for its colorful, attractive cover and for its brief but thorough description of the college. The students reported that the folder presented important information in useful ways under such categories as calendar, facilities, governance, and openness. The last category, openness (or attitude on campus), is one of the topics students say they are most interested in and one that many mailings do not mention.

A brochure from Grinnell College was the hands-down favorite of all the students we talked to. With the headline, "J.B. Wants You," its cover displayed a portrait of Josiah Bushnell Grinnell, the person to whom Horace Greeley said, "Go West, young man, go West." The students liked the cover, but they also praised the writing in the booklet, which presented "facts" and "feelings" in a Q & A format.

High marks for honesty

One of the students displayed a letter he had received from the director of

admissions at Haverford. The letter contained the following paragraph.

I am writing to you on the basis of information from a computer printout. I'm uneasy about this. We may find that contact based on statistics is inappropriate because we emphasize personal accomplishment—beyond statistics—in admissions.

The students gave it high marks for its honesty, sincerity, and acknowledgement that students were more than the statistics conveyed about them by the Student Search Service.

Highly enthusiastic when something pleased them, the students were also openly critical when a mailing offended them. For example, they all rejected travel material that either accompanied or was written into the material they received from a college. Several of them showed an invitation from a college that asked, "Are You Ready for Florida?" Speaking sternly on this point, a student asked, "Don't colleges know that we wouldn't decide on a college just because it's located near a beach or ski slope?" One girl said she loved New England and wanted to go to college there but the region's large assortment of colleges meant that she could still choose a school for its academic reputation and the courses it offers.

Newsletters or issues of newspapers produced for a college's student body received bad marks from the group when they were included in the mailings. "They don't tell enough," one student said; "...of the right things," another added. "They give too much stuff that doesn't mean a thing to anyone who's not on campus."

"The pieces are organized in news style. Some material you'd like to know about may be hidden at the bottom of page 4," a third student said.

Down with gimmicks

Several of the students had received a folder with a headline, "This message contains a rip-off." The rip-off, of course, was a postcard to be used for requesting further information. The students were unanimous in expressing their dislike for "gimmicky" materials of this kind. Other examples they showed us of such material were a small folder with an illustration of a figure in a haystack holding a large needle in his hand and lounging beneath the headline, "Gotcha," and a brochure with the headline, "The college that sounds like the name of a lady wrestler offers the best bachelor's degree program in engineering and applied science in the country." The students complained about the brand of humor they found in the latter brochure, and they said they were suspicious of any college that claimed to be the best of its kind.

The students also told us they did not like computerized letters that obviously inserted the addressee's name and address into the message. A student whose name was Elizabeth said she was very annoyed whenever the "h" (the ninth letter in her name) was dropped from the message—so annoyed that she refused to read the accompanying message.

The students were also not interested in biographies or testimonials of alumni. One college sent out a brochure, which a number of students in the group had received, and all the recipients said they had read only small parts of it and had found it boring. The students' point was: "Just because some of your alumni have had exciting, successful careers doesn't mean we will too. We don't want to know what your college did for other people; we want to know what it offers us."

"Do you judge all the mailings according to the same standards or, to some extent, are your reactions influenced by what you know about the college that's writing to you?" we asked.

"Harvard could send me anything," one student replied, "and I'd think it was great."

"I had been thinking about going to the University of Chicago," another told us, "and when I got a letter and a brochure from Chicago, I was thrilled. I didn't care what the brochure looked like. All I was interested in was that the University of Chicago was interested in me."

Obviously what a student knows about a college will influence his or her interest in the college's mailing. However, a College Board questionnaire that dealt with student reactions to college mailings revealed that of more than 2,000 respondents, 50 percent said the mailings opened up new possibilities for them.

Although the students approved of college invitations to a weekend, sports event, tea, or party, only a couple of them actually accepted such invitations. The others reported that they couldn't attend the function because they were busy, sick, taking exams, or that the event was being held at a place too far away.

We found what the students told us interesting and illuminating, and we suggest that colleges take the time to gather student reactions to their own current or planned brochures. **cnsa**

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Considering a Prospectus?

A variety of institutions report their experiences
by Ronald R. Day

Looking for a better way to handle your institution's recruiting publications? So are a lot of other people. That's what I discovered when I gathered information from admissions and publications directors recently.

I wanted to find out more about the use of one particular publication, the prospectus or general information booklet. To do this, I wrote to about 100 people; 48 of these replied.

First, a definition: By a prospectus or general information booklet, I mean a publication that gives prospective students a comprehensive view of an institution. It tells everything he or she needs to know about XYZ University. But it doesn't go into detail about faculty credentials, course descriptions, or major requirements.

Such a publication usually describes the academic program, major areas of study, the academic calendar, student life, admissions procedures, costs, and the institution's history. Most are liberally illustrated with photographs. An application for admission—and sometimes applications for financial aid, dormitory rooms, and so on—are bound in or enclosed in the envelope. Some prospectuses include career guidance and even alumni success stories.

Although these publications grew out of what we used to call viewbooks, they are much more than a collection of pretty pictures.

Here is some of the information about the prospectus that I turned up:

1. *How do you use it?* Of the 48 people who replied, 26 said that their college or university has a prospectus. In most cases, this publication is but one of several used in student recruitment. Others may include flyers developed for Student Search mailings or other mass distribution, posters, specialized publications on various aspects of the curriculum and campus life, and the catalog.

At Indiana University, for example, our high school recruiters use our 52-page prospectus, *Presenting Indiana University,* as a first-contact piece. To supplement it, we have a pamphlet series of 100 career-specific publications—one each on accounting, computer science, and medicine, for example. Our catalog, a collection of 23 bulletins prepared for each of our major undergraduate and professional schools on the Bloomington and Indianapolis campuses, goes to a student only when he or she has made a strong commitment to enroll. Then IU sends along the student handbook and other how-to-survive publications.

2. *How do you distribute it?* Answers covered a gamut. Two colleges (College of Lake County and Wesley College) mail their publication to each home within their district. They also distribute them at banks, county fairs, community events, and to churches within the area.

More typical were those colleges that send the publications only to those who display a serious interest. About half of the colleges using prospectuses say that they send them only on request. Indiana University, the University of Mississippi, and several other larger institutions use a computerized inquiry control system to manufacture address labels for mailing.

3. *How effective is it?* Almost all of those who publish prospectuses say that their admissions people like the publications and are happy with the results.

(A couple of people said their admissions people "are never happy." Their admissions professionals looked on the prospectus as "an unnecessary piece of advertising.")

Here are some specific comments on effectiveness:

"Information in one source is a service to students as well as a method for improving administration. When multiple pieces are sent, the student could be confused." —University of California System-wide Office.

"The all-in-one piece is good only for the serious prospective student, high school personnel, government agencies, and so on. It is much too detailed for younger high school students, casual shoppers, and even many serious prospects." —Heald Business College.

"Our *Perspectives* is an effective publication; however, it would be less so if it included the graduate and professional schools. Admissions are up, and we continue to value this publication even though the unit cost was 16 cents this year." —Vanderbilt University.

"Because of the heavy volume of requests for information, our all-in-one piece is an economic necessity. We produce 130,000 copies at 13.8 cents each." —University of Colorado at Boulder.

"Students and counselors as well as parents appreciate having all important information in one place. We've found particularly effective our *Financial Aid Prospectus,* which includes application forms." —University of California, Irvine.

"Serves to 'show the flag' at high school visitations, and to respond to inquiries such as 'I'm a high school sophomore; send me everything about USF.' Tells enough about us to sift out those who are looking for a small, private, and/or rural school, or a major in architecture, zoo-keeping, or nearby snow-skiing." —University of South Florida.

4. *What are the pitfalls?* I asked for possible problems with this type of publication. Those who answered listed several difficulties.

Some said that the prospectus might give the student more than he or she could comprehend at one sitting. Also, it can be too general and leave important questions unanswered.

If you don't watch flowery copy and glowing descriptions, you can be dishonest with prospective students. "Too many pretty pictures and too little information may lead to some dishonesty," warned a professional at Purdue. "Frequently one fails to spend as much time on the copy as on design."

Costs can be another problem. "Admissions people hesitate to distribute them freely because of the high per-unit cost," said my source at Old Dominion University. "Also, changes to

Ronald R. Day, formerly director of publications and printing at Indiana University in Bloomington, is now chief of the Printing and Graphic Division of the World Bank in Washington, D.C.

one section of the book mean starting all over."

The general approach may not be as effective as more targeted efforts, several people said.

"It tries to cover too much ground and ends up being boring and uninteresting due to a lack of a direct message." —State University of New York College at Potsdam.

"Mailing costs and speed of delivery are major factors to us," said a staffer at the University of Rhode Island. "We prefer to send light booklets by first class if necessary rather than sending a heavy [prospectus] second class with poor delivery."

All of these problems can be dealt with, and many institutions like ours find the prospectus an invaluable recruiting tool. Other universities, however, have abandoned it.

"Our admissions people were happy with our all-in-one publication...but we had to discontinue it this year due to pressure from academic areas. They saw it as competition for the catalog." —Northern Illinois University.

"We produced a system-wide viewbook until three years ago. Due to the legislature's frowning on intensive recruiting by state institutions, it was discontinued." —The University of Tennessee.

"Our university is in a transitional phase away from the all-in-one recruitment piece [prospectus]....Our experience with it has been poor, probably because of our nature as a nontraditional university with a commuter campus." —Wright State University.

Because the catalog is our most costly publication, we've spent a lot of our effort and attention on that. With the advent of the prospectus as a major recruiting tool, I think we must also concentrate on what one should contain and how it should be used. Perhaps my informal survey will set the stage for future discussions as we try both to present our institutions in the best light and to meet the information needs of prospective students. cnse

Is Your Catalog on Target?

Measure its effectiveness with this checklist
by Mary Lou Krause

To upgrade the effectiveness of your catalog, you need to take a new look at what you're doing and why you're doing it. To help, here's a checklist.

Writing and editing

1. Have you edited all copy to clarify expression and to avoid redundancy? Do you use short sentences wherever possible? Remember that the language of higher education is new to prospective students, and long, involved sentences lose the reader. Use the Fog Index (p. 78) to measure readability level.

2. Do you write forcefully? Use familiar words. Avoid overblown phrases: "with reference to," "a total of," and so on. Use active verbs. Write conversationally. In editing material from academic departments, translate the "Ph.D. copy" into prose that high school students can understand.

3. Is copy carefully edited to avoid sexism? You don't have to use the awkward "he or she," "he/she," and "his/her." Try the plural: "Students must submit their degree plans...." In informal sections, change to the second person. Speak directly to the audience by using "you" for prospective students, "we" for the college.

4. Has all copy been edited for consistency? Material from different departments should be revised to your predetermined arrangement and style. For example, do all departments list degree requirements in the same form, either running copy in a paragraph or arranging copy in a numbered list?

5. After editing, do you consult with department heads or others who originated copy to be sure you have maintained their intended meaning? This courtesy lets you explain changes so that people won't be surprised when the catalog comes out.

Design and format

1. Is the catalog organized logically so that information is easy to locate? Are the table of contents and index carefully prepared?

2. Is the type easy to read, contemporary in feeling? Are column widths right for easy reading? Is the typeface large enough for readability in main copy, perhaps smaller for course descriptions, degrees, or addenda?

3. Does your subhead style help readers to see relationships of various parts and to locate materials easily?

4. Do you use typographic aids such as thumb tabs, running heads, and so on to make the book a usable reference?

5. Is there enough white space to make the book attractive and readable? Do you use white space to emphasize headings and photos?

6. Do you avoid overdesigning—unnecessary use of color, reverse type, italics, tint blocks, ornate rules, type over pictures?

7. Do you regard your present format as the best one for your audience considering your objectives and budget? Or do you keep it because "it's always been that way"?

8. If you use photos, do you regard them as another way to communicate your message or simply as decoration? Are the photos honest in the messages they communicate?

Planning and production

1. Do you carefully prepare specifications for a bid request to include all information the printer will need? Do you ask for prices on various alternative specs? Do you include statements needed to protect against late delivery, poor quality, and other mishaps?

2. Do you request bids from enough printers and typesetters (general, catalog specialists, type houses) to give you a clear picture of price trends?

3. Do you lay out in advance a production chart, planning backward from the needed delivery date and for-

Mary Lou Krause was formerly publications editor at Rice University in Houston, Texas.

ward from the time material will be available? Synchronize this plan with the printer's schedule once you accept a bid.

4. Do you maintain a log of each production step, noting actual dates every section of copy comes in or goes out of your office? This helps prepare next year's production chart.

5. Do you see that all copy and every proof is read at least two times: once reading for sense and style, once with an assistant reading aloud from original copy? It is advisable to have a person unfamiliar with the copy read it one time also. Students are immensely helpful in this work.

6. Do you keep copies of each piece of manuscript or proof you send out? This consumes paper but is well worth it in event of loss.

7. Do you *write* all directions to the typesetter/printer and keep a file copy? The spoken word is easily misunderstood.

8. Do you give credit for photographs, especially if you use student photographers? One sentence listing names (and perhaps pages) is adequate.

9. As soon as the catalog comes out, do you do a written evaluation of the year's production problems/successes, including suggestions for next year? CASE

Don't Be an Old Foggy

Test for clear writing

Once research helps you pinpoint the characteristics of your publics, make sure your publications speak their language. For example, are you writing college-level prose to high school students?

One way to measure the clarity and simplicity of your writing is to use the Fog Index.* Douglas Mueller, of the Gunning-Mueller Institute of Clear Writing, Inc., cautions that the index is "not a formula for clear writing." Learn the principles of clear writing, he advises, and use the index to check yourself. Here's how it works:

1. *Determine average sentence length.* Count the number of words in successive sentences, stopping at 100 words or slightly more. If the piece is long, you also may wish to count several samples of 100 words, spaced evenly throughout. Divide the total number of words by the number of sentences to get the average sentence length of the piece.

2. *Count the number of hard words per 100 words.* A hard word is one of three or more syllables. Don't count words that (a) are capitalized, (b) are combinations of short easy words (like "bookkeeper" and "manpower"), or (c) are verbs made into three syllables by adding *es* or *ed* (such as "created" or "trespasses"). If you use more than one passage, compute the average number of hard words for each.

3. *Find the comprehension level.* Add the two factors just counted—the average sentence length and the percentage of hard words—and multiply by 0.4. The total represents the years of education a reader needs to understand what you've written. CASE

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MAY/JUNE 1982

Consumerism Comes to Campus

by Elaine El-Khawas

Consumerism, at first glance, may not seem to apply to higher education. After all, it's the product ratings of *Consumer Reports.* It's actions taken against fraudulent auto repair shops. It's truth-in-labeling laws directed toward large corporations.

Does consumerism relate to colleges and universities? More and more frequently, the answer to that question has been "yes," with the entire perspective of consumerism being applied to higher education. By a direct analogy, the student is seen as the consumer who makes an educational purchase in the highly diversified marketplace of colleges and universities.

As with traditional usage, the concern is that consumers can be misled by inaccurate, incomplete, or exaggerated statements sometimes found in the industry's advertising. As a result, it is argued, students need traditional consumer protection safeguards—including truth-in-advertising, full disclosure, and rights of redress—just as much as do other consumers.

Despite weaknesses in the analogy, consumerism represents a serious allegation that our current procedures and materials mislead and confuse applicants, possibly leading to faulty decisions about where to attend college. There is a concern that students who receive inadequate information are later surprised and become distressed, sometimes to the point of dropping out.

Although these allegations may seem unfair and distorted, they are ones we cannot dismiss. Many people are raising questions, citing problems, and recommending new forms of protection for the student.

The issue has already provoked a response at the state and federal

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government levels. Some recently proposed federal legislation includes consumerist provisions. The U.S. Office of Education has already added several consumer protection components to its requirements for the Guaranteed Student Loan program. Under these requirements, institutions must now have a tuition refund policy and provide several types of information to students, including job placement statistics on graduates of their career field programs. And some states have already changed their procedures for licensing educational institutions.

Our "clients" themselves are also beginning to raise questions about their consumer rights. Students (and their parents) are writing complaint letters to members of congress or state legislators. In Connecticut, a woman sued for a tuition refund, claiming that she learned nothing in a course. In New Jersey, a graduate student sued because, he said, the constant altering of degree requirements made it impossible for him to complete his Ph.D.

What can and should we at colleges and universities do about the consumerism issue? We can simply refuse to deal with it. Or we can rely on a broadly worded disclaimer statement in our college catalogs.

Another response, probably more appropriate, is to take a thoughtful look at the underlying issues and to review our current procedures as they affect students. In principle, consumerism calls for an objective we all should share: honest publications and fair treatment of both prospective and enrolled students.

A student will feel cheated if the paradise promised in catalogs, viewbooks, and other admissions materials turns out to be a mirage. To avoid this kind of danger, it is good policy to evaluate periodically the accuracy of your publications. Do you know, for instance, how a student's experiences at your college compare with what he or she expected before enrollment? What would current students say about your catalog? Would they consider it a true reflection of your institution? Does your catalog omit information students need to know? These are questions at the heart of the student consumer issue.

If you want some *honest* answers, you've got to get out of the office and talk with students, their parents, and your own admissions staff. Administer short questionnaires; conduct interviews; hold informal discussions. Chances are you will find that you can provide more accurate, complete, and up-to-date information as well as more pointed communications for particular groups of students.

The biggest weakness of many catalogs rests with course and faculty listings. Both lists should be as up-to-date as possible. Does your catalog make it clear that some professors concentrate on research and do little teaching? How accurate are your statements that courses will be offered "each term" or "annually"?

Although broad generalizations are probably inevitable in a catalog, you should be sensitive to the need for mentioning specific exceptions. If you state "classes are small," you should also note that freshman classes are usually quite large, if that be the case.

Avoid general statements that exaggerate the size, scope, or permanence of your institution's offerings. For example, if you offer relatively few graduate courses, possibly in only one or two fields of study, avoid blanket statements about offerings on "both the undergraduate and graduate levels." When a department is very small and has a limited program, the catalog should not convey a contrary image.

Try to confront the issue of post-college employment honestly and openly. Point out that colleges and universities offer an education, not job training. Whenever possible, present specific facts on the post-college placement of your graduates. Do you make it sufficiently clear that you offer counseling and job-finding assistance, not automatic job placement?

Write-ups about student life should convey actual or likely college experiences. Consider student-written accounts for a candid down-to-earth viewpoint.

Try using available resources at your institution to develop new information about probable concerns of incoming freshmen. Your registrar's office might be able to provide figures on how many freshmen fail at least one course during their first term.

The academic dean might have information on styles of teaching at your college. If classes are informal with much student discussion, it's helpful to say so. If independent study and tutorials are available in some majors and not in others, make this clear.

Consider whether you give enough information on your institution's standards for academic progress. Do you describe in detail the rules covering academic probation and dismissal? Knowledge in these areas can lead students to a better understanding of both their academic rights and their responsibilities.

It is vitally important to give complete descriptions regarding financial aid. Furnish details about repayment terms, interest rates, and legal obligations of students who accept a particular type of assistance.

Also look for new ways to present financial information so that prospective students can compare likely total costs with estimates of available financial aid. Are annual tuition increases projected? Will there be significant extra costs for equipment and supplies for certain majors? Is financial aid recalculated each year based on family circumstances?

Admissions materials may include basic information for incoming students and still not answer important questions asked by certain groups of students. Pre-medical students, for instance, have special questions and needs. Perhaps literature and advising programs could be developed just for them.

Transfer students, in particular, need to know about special academic requirements that apply to them. Inform part-time students of their eligibility for financial aid and of how many courses they may carry. Consider the special needs of foreign students and commuters.

These suggestions should serve as a springboard for further thinking about ways to improve the effectiveness of your institution's publications. The consumerist perspective may have its weaknesses, but it can also help us achieve our own long-term goals of fair treatment and responsiveness to students, both prospective and enrolled.

Consumer advocates may stress the potential abuses of students and may continue to press for legislative or regulatory remedies to such problems. Ultimately, however, the key to fair treatment of students lies with each institution and its sensitivity to student needs and interests. cnsa

Section 7

Recruitment Tools: Using Film and Slide Shows

A Star Is Born

Production planning—from the beginning
by Valerie O'Brien Smith

Like any institution planning to portray itself on film, Skidmore College thought in terms of scenes: the people who would play "perfect" parts, the way the camera would pan over a favorite building or stretch of landscape. These memorable scenes are the images great films are made of.

But as Skidmore found out, a hefty period of hard self-analysis and strategic decisions comes before the cameras ever roll.

Says Bill Walker, Skidmore's director of public affairs, "I wondered sometimes, 'Is this really necessary, to be this precise and to plan in this much detail?' But once we began to shoot, I saw it *was* all necessary—to get the most out of our shooting days, to figure out the logistics of getting the film crew around."

Walker was referring to a phase in filmmaking called pre-production. It covers everything from your initial plans to the moment shooting starts. Technically, pre-production begins when an institution hires a film producer (unless you're producing in-house). Actually, though, pre-production starts long before that, when an institution first discusses its film. The process continues as you develop ideas, form a committee, focus on the film's major points, do research, interview, write a script, and schedule interview subjects and scenes that need to be shot.

In short, pre-production is a vital step in making a film, even though it doesn't involve any film production per se. This is the time for your institution to take stock of its needs, pare them down to a workable subject, and decide how to translate the film's goals into visual and emotional terms.

Walker calls the process "absolutely crucial." His counterpart at the University of Rochester, Senior Public Affairs Officer Don Lyon, agrees. Lyon says that "50 to 60 percent" of the final product's success depends on pre-production. Both institutions weathered the storms of pre-production to produce films that have won CASE grand awards.

But even before pre-production, you have some decisions to make.

Deciding if film works for you

First you need to be sure that film is the best vehicle for what you want to do. It's not if you want it to catalog your institution's virtues and needs in a lengthy narration. Film is at its best when it speaks to the emotions and wins the heart, thus setting the stage for written and in-person interviews. Film should complement the written word, not replace it.

To develop a top-flight film, your institution must focus on its needs and be willing to spell out those needs in motion picture terms. You as campus coordinator must also make lots of pre-production decisions. Do you want a development film or an admissions film? If you try to cover both, you'll end up with no focus at all—and a film that does neither job well.

Let's say you want a fund-raising film. You have to ask such questions as whether the film will be part of a campaign, and which part. Every institution will answer the questions differently. For instance, Pepperdine University recently used a film to open its $100-million capital campaign. But in 1983, Skidmore College used a film to keep the momentum going after a campaign ended.

How will the film work in conjunction with events, speeches, or brochures? Should your institution consider scripting one film for two different audiences? How about using film footage to produce 30-, 60-, and 90-second spots for TV? UCLA, for example, cut spots from its film and aired them during Rose Bowl games over the past two years.

Answering questions like these at the beginning of a production simply defines how the film will evolve. This kind of precise planning also helps you make a stronger pitch for your film's budget.

Seeking the cutting edge

Few colleges and universities have identical film needs. A close look always reveals rich differences in culture, location, and other factors that make an institution unique.

In UCLA's film, for example, the university wanted to emphasize its world-renowned research contributions. At the same time, it wanted to show close student-teacher ties and a healthy relationship between the university and its surrounding community.

Skidmore had a different development challenge. It wanted to make the institution's more seasoned alumnae feel a kinship with an alma mater that had moved to a new campus and become coeducational.

Obviously, no institution can condense its particular strengths and needs into a focused film concept overnight. It takes time. But after the college or university makes the initial decisions, a film producer can help.

Filmmakers can assist clients first by spending time on a campus researching its needs. During this scouting expedition, filmmakers should poke around the library and archives, visit classrooms, watch athletic events, and talk to lots of people. The goal should be to zero in on what's distinctive about the place, and, if possible, to tape interviews with students, faculty, and administrators.

Campus representatives should help filmmakers select people to interview. Then, when the filmmakers transcribe these interviews, they can see who are the best subjects for the film. The transcripts do double duty because often they can be used in writing the script. And because the interviews are of professional quality, they can serve as voiceover in the film.

The insider's view

Obviously, campuses considering a film project have a great deal of groundwork to do.

Skidmore's film started "with a couple of people who had an idea about how film could fit in with the rest of our communications," Walker says. "We needed a message with emotional impact to go with publications we already had."

Valerie O'Brien Smith is executive vice president and a producer for Seven Seas Cinema in New York City. One of her projects was pre-production on a film for Colgate University's $75-million campaign.

From that idea, Walker wrote up a proposal and submitted it to top administrators and faculty members. An informal group of faculty department chairs and administrative heads interviewed the final selection of film producers. From the production stage on, Walker and the director of alumni affairs coordinated the project. However, they routinely contacted administrators and faculty to solicit reactions and to report on progress.

At the University of Rochester, Lyon's first step was to form a committee. Lyon chaired the group, which agreed on a brief statement of the film's most important objective. The stated objective sounds simple: "To encourage quality students to apply to the University of Rochester." But writing it, he says, took as much time as any other aspect of the production.

"Once you've got that objective," says Lyon, "the film's content seems to come to you. You ask, What are the characteristics of that quality student? What does the University of Rochester offer that would make that student come here?"

Answering these questions also helped the university select the right students to interview, to write into the script, and to profile in the film.

Despite their bad press, committees *can* work, according to Lyon and Walker. But both strongly advise keeping the number of committee members as low as possible. And, they add, have the buck stop with a strong committee leader.

"It's best to keep the committee to a group of four or five," says Lyon. "You are going to have a good deal of disagreement anyway. If you have fewer people, it's easier to resolve those disagreements."

As for the committee leader, he or she "must take responsibility for handling everything that goes into production," says Walker. "No mixed messages. Decisions and ideas coming from different sources have to be channeled through a single person, or you'll have chaos."

Lyon recommends having "some top brass person"—such as a president or provost—waiting in the wings as a final arbitrator. Consult this person, he says, only if the committee reaches an impasse on a serious decision.

Both Lyon and Walker advise coordinators to stay closely involved in every step of the production.

Lyon, for instance, sat in on all 55 taped interviews for the Rochester film. "We knew from the beginning that we wanted no narrator," he recalls. "The interviewers made sure questions were answered in full sentences, complete with subject, so that the absence of a narrator would not be a problem." By getting so deeply involved, Lyon always knew what material the interviewers were gathering. And he could add his own questions at the end when he wanted.

Walker remembers the large amount of time he spent helping identify what needed to be shot. He also helped get special equipment for the crew, such as a cherry picker for vertical shots and a helicopter for the film's opening aerial sequence. That crucial shot swept viewers from Skidmore's old campus to its new one.

"We scheduled the helicopter five times," Walker says, "and each time the weather didn't cooperate." The crew needed clear flying weather and wanted a certain morning light. But mornings were always either hazy or foggy. Only on the sixth try did the skies finally clear.

Lyon, too, recalls spending "days and days" scheduling a 12-day shoot. Rochester wanted to cover at least two seasons, autumn and winter, as well as sports activities. "It took a lot of planning to make the seasons and scheduled activities coincide with the limited period of time the crew would be on campus," he says.

The value of outside expertise

During this research and interview period, an outside producer's experience and objectivity can be a great help. For one thing, says Walker, there's the notion that you're bringing in an expert. "A professional team gives others confidence in the validity of the whole thing. This is someone who is there to work on the production. Everyone takes things more seriously."

Professional experience also offers quick solutions to problems that might take longer for media novices to solve. For instance, the University of Rochester feared that prospective students would shun the upstate New York campus because of the severe winters. So when we at Seven Seas were hired to produce the film, we suggested that the film emphasize the excellent winter sports and the beauty of the changing weather. One section of the film backed up a montage of rain scenes at Rochester with the haunting sound of the library's chimes. (Our biggest problem here, incidentally, was getting a "pure" chime sound, minus the coos of pigeons in the bell tower.)

An outsider's objectivity also helps. At one campus, everyone we talked to felt that a particular professor would be a perfect film subject. He was witty, they said, and all the kids loved him. It occurred to no one that the professor's stutter, immediately obvious to us in the interview, would cause trouble on film. In an isolated voiceover, his speech problem would distract.

Pre-production and beyond

Whether or not you use an outside producer, take this advice:

- *Don't showcase campus superstars unless they contribute substance to the film.* Every institution has administrators and others who deserve credit for their fine work. What better way to honor them than with a cameo appearance on film—right?

Wrong. In most cases, these cameos are not as visually or emotionally appealing as student and faculty profiles and fast-moving montages. Instead, why not have your star introduce the film or comment afterward in person, not on film. Or work the person into a filmed scene with some action. For example, in a Brown University film, President Howard Swearer was shown talking to a group of parents.

- *Use people in action and interaction.* Colleges are loaded with dynamic people whose actions create magical interplay on film. There's the biologist crouched over a microscope, surrounded by samples, or the student struggling at a computer terminal, finally making a breakthrough. There's the home basketball team pounding down the court as overtime minutes tick away, or the rousing performance by the campus orchestra. In all of these scenes, film stimulates emotion and helps the audience feel a part of the scene through deftly coordinated sound and movement.
- *Have everyone agree on the script before production.* Don't start shooting until everyone involved OKs the script.

After all, the script structures film and guides the producer in scheduling the shoot. Making script changes before production begins is less costly than re-shooting a scene. Besides, a solid script fosters creativity in shooting and editing, and soon the film takes on a life of its own. That's when a film works.

• *If you're considering an outside producer, hire someone who has both intellectual curiosity and time.* The person should have a genuine interest in the project and a production schedule that allows time to grasp the essence of an institution. Needless to say, this takes more than a week.

The rewards of time and trouble

No filmmaking lacks headaches. But Skidmore's Walker says that he has no regrets about his hard work. "I knew what had gone into the production," he says. "I knew we'd given it our best shot. And with that knowledge, it was easier to be a spokesman, to report on progress, and to make the case for an occasional budget adjustment that I knew was important."

And in all the planning and research that make a successful film possible, there can be hidden rewards. Says Walker: "It gave me a new and different view of a place I thought I knew very well. I did know it well, but now I know it *much* better." CASE

The Producers

Finding the one who's right for you—and your audio-visual show
by Gladys Wurtemburg

You want to put together an audio-visual show. But you don't have the facilities, time, or know-how to do it all in-house. That's when you should consider an outside producer.

Before you start looking

Naturally, you can't choose a producer until you know what kind of show you want. Are you building a simple, cabin-in-the-woods set of slides to show new administrators what your institution looks like? Or are you constructing a Hyatt Regency of a major film documentary? A description of the project in tightly worded specifications helps clarify your needs, both for yourself and the producer.

If by some chance you don't know how to write specifications for this "million-dollar movie," ask someone who has made one. Call up CASE, the Public Relations Society of America, your local ad council, the Better Business Bureau, local film suppliers, your own faculty and alumni, or friends. As you ask questions, the specs will emerge. These specs will include:

- format (slides, video, sound, etc.);
- a start-to-finish production schedule to follow;
- definitions of audiences and uses;
- a geographic span of locations (one campus, two, etc.);
- unusual shooting conditions (laser labs, aerial views);
- script (narrator, live interviews, etc.); and
- special effects (illustrations, animation, and so on).

If writing the specs becomes too technical, hire a consultant to act as your "architect" before you bring in a "contractor"—the producer.

If you call in a producer before the specifications have been refined, you may force the producer to bid on shifting considerations—and the bids won't be accurate. You can, however, use producers to help you think through the technical end of your production, as long as they understand that this is an informal conversation, not a bidding situation. As with artists, photographers, or ad agencies, be careful not to "lift" ideas or products unless you're willing to pay for them.

What to look for

As you narrow down your choices, consider these points:

• *Experience.* Has the company produced similar jobs? Can the producer relate to you, to members of the administration and faculty, to students?

• *Resources.* Does the company have sufficient staff and equipment for your needs? Large companies and producers tend to overwhelm all but the most experienced of us. But the selection process becomes most difficult at the lower end of the size scale, where you are dealing with the one- or two-person shop.

• *Reputation.* Is the producer known for quality and reliability? Sometimes the nicest people turn out to be incompetent. Ask for references, and check them. Your own initial queries to CASE and to your colleagues will help weed out the rip-off artists.

• *Cost.* Is the producer reasonable in price? Taking bids from at least three to five producers will give you some sense of how the market in A/V commodities is running.

How to carry through

Signing a contract doesn't mean you're through with the project. Throughout the filming, you have to give the producer the support and materials that are necessary for building the production you want.

Textbook logic has it that an audio-visual project, as one element of a larger program, should reflect a grand strategy already established at your institution. In the real world, however, such a consensus rarely exists.

For example, when we produced a slide show for student recruitment at the City College of New York, we were in the midst of a period of administrative transition. This required us to work with an acting president and several acting or interim deans, provosts, and so on.

Gladys Wurtemburg, formerly director of public relations at the City College of the City University of New York, is now retired. She and Tom Colvin, author of the next article about soundtracks, co-produced CCNY's slide show, for which they both earned Silver Screen awards for "outstanding creativity" from the U.S. Industrial Film Festival.

With this in mind, we sought a producer with an understanding of the academic mind and a sensitivity for the concerns of an educational institution.

We set up a central contact point in the public relations office so that the producer needed to deal with only one person. But behind that focus lay a series of administrative and faculty groups whose advice and consent were sought all along the way. Thus, in addition to our technical specifications, we had our own series of checks and balances among administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Over a period of months, we slowly extracted a consensus about CCNY from these many disparate elements.

If you can anticipate your needs before you start shopping for a producer, you should end up with one who has the expertise your job requires. And by deciding as much as possible in advance, you can save the producer's time *and* your money. CASE

The Sweet Sounds of Success

Your soundtrack can make—or break—your slide show
by Tom Colvin

Less than a decade ago, textbooks on moviemaking cautioned filmmakers not to build elaborate soundtracks. After all, these filmmakers were making moving *pictures*. Sound distracted.

Nowadays, after "2001" and "Star Wars," major movies trumpet Surround Sound and Dolby Stereo. And this year even TV, the last bulwark of flimsy sound, features stereo broadcasts and uses hi-fi video equipment. Soundtracks have arrived.

Over the past 20 years, sound has grown more important to the success of slide shows. In the 1960s, slide shows were little more than illustrated speeches. In the early 1970s, with the advent of newfangled cassette tape recorders, folks began to merge preproduced soundtracks with trays of slides. Still, however, photography reigned because soundtracks were little more than wall-to-wall narration over nonstop Muzak. Finally, the late 1970s brought slide shows with sophisticated soundtracks melding narration, actualities, sound effects, and music.

Why have soundtracks often taken a starring role in slide shows? Because they can bring a show to life by capturing the attention of action-oriented audiences. In other words, the well-produced soundtrack transforms a slide show into a movie—or produces the same effect.

In the past, film and video were the only media of motion. Yet their high production costs often make them unrealistic alternatives for colleges and universities, which generally have small budgets for audio-visual productions. For campuses, then, the ascendance of the soundtrack in less costly slide shows spells savings.

Inside a soundtrack

If you're producing a slide show or any other A/V show, you should know the four basic ingredients of a soundtrack.

- *Narration.* This is made up of the words the show's producers write for the host or storyteller to say. It may or may not be the basic script of the production. The narration can tell a story, or it can be the thread holding the story together. Some shows have no narration at all.
- *Actualities.* A term stolen from radio, actualities are taped comments gathered through interviews or from speeches. They offer an immediacy and credibility that straight narration lacks. These days, actualities in A/V soundtracks are *de rigeur.*
- *Sound effects.* These may be discreet sounds—for example, a ringing chapel bell. Or they may capture general background noise, such as the grandstand crowd at a football game or a class in session. Sound effects can transport an audience to a different place and bring a scene to life. For instance, a scene in a busy office doesn't ring true without the appropriate background sounds.
- *Music.* Producers can now use a vast reservoir of "library music" that was unavailable a decade ago. Major music libraries offer hundreds of music recordings. Smaller libraries are also springing up around the country and offer either specialized music or favorable pricing policies.

With these four ingredients, you can produce a technically competent soundtrack—but not necessarily an effective one. For a soundtrack that stands out from the crowd, you need the four C's: concept, coherence, cadence, and confetti.

Soundtracks with pizzazz

Let's take a closer look at these four C's and what they mean for slide shows.

1. *Convey a concept.* It is not enough to use a dazzling mix of visuals and sound to tell the world that YOUR COLLEGE is wonderful. Behind all that technical razzle-dazzle your show needs a central, compelling idea. Many college shows today feature the razzle-dazzle but lack the concept. To find your concept, ask yourself: What is it that my institution wants to say in this show, and is our message clear

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and compelling?

To create your own winning concept (and there's no easy formula), ask yourself the following questions:

- Can I summarize the concept in one simple sentence?
- Is the concept rich enough to sustain elaboration?
- Can I tie the concept to human experience? (Forget high-flown philosophy.)
- Does the concept offer insight into a problem or experience?

This last question may be the most important. Your concept must be realistic as well as clear, simple, and down-to-earth. It must be an elucidating glimpse.

2. *Create coherence.* Consistency and organization are musts in A/V media because the ear becomes the primary collector of meaning. The listener must understand all relationships at a single, swift pass. Therefore, pay special attention to transitional devices in the soundtrack. In your narration and actualities, use:

- strong and direct theme sentences in each paragraph;
- parallel structure and rhythm;
- synonyms and repeated words;
- alliteration;
- transitional words;
- words identifying relationship, such as "not only…but also"; and
- summary statements.

Incidentally, producers of most soundtracks these days make the mistake of not using transitional devices in actualities. They simply use them in narrations and leave actualities unedited—and, unfortunately, incoherent.

One of the best ways to create coherence is to develop a script outline *before* you interview on tape. Then you know ahead of time how each section relates to the sections before and after. You can also anticipate what transitional devices you'll need.

When you gather actualities, do more interviewing than you could possibly need so that you will have lots of material from which to choose. Ask the same question in different ways, and ask at least three people the same question. You can even phrase questions to encourage responses that incorporate transitional devices called for in your outline. For instance, if your show's concept concerns "pride," pose questions that prompt your subjects to talk about why they're proud of an education from your university. More than likely, subjects will use the word "pride" in their responses.

Do *not*, by the way, tell the person you're interviewing what to say. If you do, you'll only end up with an interview that sounds scripted. Spontaneity is what makes the actuality powerful.

3. *Create cadence.* Cadence has many meanings for a soundtrack, and you must pay attention to all of them.

First, cadence means "balanced, rhythmic flow." Speech rhythms in soundtracks are, naturally, very important. So are silences—long pauses and short subtle ones. When you write a narration, read it aloud. Imagine a spotlight on yourself and perform the script. Don't worry about overdramatizing. Listen to yourself. Does the writing invite you to read the phrases with logical pauses, creating rhythms? Or do the words seem to stream along endlessly? As a test, read *this* paragraph carefully. Turn it over on your tongue. And note opportunities for rhythmic expression. If this exercise makes you uncomfortable, if you cannot become a temporary performer, if these words do not inspire the orator in you—then look for professional assistance in writing your script.

Even actualities should be rhythmic. A skillful tape editor can often transform a rambling actuality into a tight statement. Also, an experienced interviewer with a clear understanding of the results you're looking for can shut down rambling comments and elicit pithy responses.

Cadence also refers to the general inflection or modulation of the voice. These inflections and modulations contribute to aural meaning and overall rhythm. Study again our practice paragraph. Where do the accents fall? Where does the tone of voice naturally turn up? turn down? Hearing and understanding these voice patterns help you choose and direct your narrator.

In its musical sense, cadence means "a progression of chords moving to a harmonic close or point of rest." Your soundtrack requires such closures of meaning and rests. That's why you should organize the soundtrack in "chapters" of meaning. Make it clear when a new chapter begins and ends, and don't allow any chapter to run for much longer than three minutes. By organizing your soundtrack this way, you'll discover that you can squeeze an extra minute or two into the presentation without straining the audience's attention span. These extra minutes become crucial when your presentation incorporates time-consuming actualities.

4. *Cast confetti.* Distinguished productions contain a dash of spice that I call "confetti." Confetti is a production device that introduces aural surprises designed to maintain your audience's attention. The surprise might be a musical tag at the end of each chapter. It might be a musical interlude after a stretch of unadorned narration—a breather of sorts. Or it might be a specific sound effect, such as a witty actuality or cheerleaders performing a special cheer.

One caveat: Being a successful confetti-thrower requires an excellent sense of timing. The device falls flat if it comes too soon or too late. Often in a soundtrack there comes a moment when you subconsciously expect or want something to happen. *That's* confetti time.

The 1984 grand award-winning slide show produced by Pennsylvania State University School of Agriculture features excellent confetti-throwing. Each time the show threatens to drag, the soundtrack cuts to a group of prospective students making jokes about the "cow college." Gradually, the tone of these cutaways changes from disrespect to esteem. The device not only enlivens the show's pace, but it also builds audience respect for the school.

Whether you work with an outside consultant or produce an A/V show in-house, pay extra attention to sound. Sound is not the only aspect you must consider, but it's a major one that many producers overlook. Your rewards will be an attentive audience and, quite possibly, more students and funds. And your boss may throw confetti your way, too. cnse

The Final Countdown

Everything you need to produce a slide show in-house
by Denny Rehder

The audience turns to face the screen. The lights dim and the slide show begins. Images appear and change on the screen—but there's no sound!

You stop the show, turn up the lights . . . what's happened? Everything was fine this afternoon.

It takes a few minutes to find the hotel technician and trace the problem. He changed the switching on the sound system early in the evening, cutting off your sound. You're angry, and your audience is restless. After several tense minutes, you finally restart the show—this time, complete with sound.

From the moment you decide to produce a slide show until the moment it appears on the screen, planning can be everything. This is especially true if, because of a limited budget, you want to produce and present the show yourself.

If you're among the many who choose to create a slide show in-house, here are some tips and checklists to help you with the three major phases of slide show development: planning, production, and presentation.

Planning

The more planning you put into your show in advance, the better off you'll be during the final presentation. Start by asking questions. See "Rehder's Basic Planning Questions" for some starting points.

Once you've established the guidelines, you need to develop a budget, a production schedule, a visual style, and a guiding concept. It's wise to put all this in writing for your client department to review or approve.

Here are some basic points to keep in mind as you work on this document:

1. *Build your budget.* As you develop your budget, ask yourself:
   - What needs can I fill in-house?
   - What outside services will I need?
   - Will I need to rent or buy any equipment?
   - Will I have any travel expenses?

In addition to paying for travel, lodging, and meals, you may need some or all of the items on this list:

Supplies: film, chemicals, slide mounts, slide trays, production music.

Equipment: pieces you need to buy, borrow, or rent.

Outside suppliers: film processing, photographers, writers, narrators, an audio studio, and programmers.

Rehder's Basic Planning Questions

- Why is the show needed?
- Who's it for?
- What's the occasion?
- What are your objectives? Are you trying to inform, entertain, train, or motivate your audience?
- Where will the presentation be shown?
- Will it be used in more than one location?
- Will it travel?
- Will you use a single screen or multiple screens?
- Will you use front or rear projection?
- How long should the show last?
- Will it be completely recorded, or will it supplement a live presentation?

2. *Set your production schedule.* Most of us don't have the luxury of doing one project at a time. So, to keep things moving along, you'll need to set some intermediate deadlines. I usually work backward from the first show date and hope that when I get to the beginning I'm not already a week behind schedule!

As a rule of thumb, assume it takes eight weeks to produce a 15-minute, single-screen show. "Rehder's Basic Production Schedule" gives you some dates to put in your schedule.

3. *Develop your visual style.* In most instances, the visual style colleges choose is documentary—people interacting with each other in the dorm, in the classroom, on campus, or on the athletic field. Other visual styles could be classified as straightforward (usually for product or item slides), artistic (recreating life as art), abstract (nonrepresentational), graphic (using words, designs, or symbols), or illustrative (through cartoons or other similar artwork). Each show should have a primary visual style, but other styles may be incorporated.

Production

Once your planning is complete, you're ready to produce the show. Of course, the show you create will depend on your resources and equipment. Whatever your budget and facilities, here are some steps common to all productions:

1. *Research your subject.* Research is the process of gathering information from which the script and photography will be developed. Conducting research can be as simple as visiting the subject of the show—a student, teacher, coach, administrator, or an entire department or office. During your visit, look for settings you can use. You may need to read brochures, biographical sketches, college catalogs, or other materials that relate to the subject of your show.

2. *Write the script.* Remember that your script is a speech. Members of your audience must understand it at once; they won't be able to go back and re-read for clarity. So read aloud what you write. Avoid convoluted sentences and confusing statistics.

Approvals are always a concern. Usually several people must approve a script, but you should try to involve as few people as possible. Remind them that these are words that will be spoken, not read.

3. *Shoot the slides.* Make a list of shots you *must* have and a list of shots that may be visually interesting. Scout your shooting locations in advance. Look for lighting problems. In some locations you may only be able to shoot at certain times; in others, you may find that camera equipment is off-limits entirely. It's better to find these things out in advance.

Will you need any special effects slides? Any that show words or graphics? Get these going so they'll be ready when you need them.

4. *Line up a narrator.* The weakest

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part of most slide shows is the audio track, so plan to work hardest on it. If possible, use a professional narrator, preferably one with slide show experience. Try to choose a voice that fits your presentation.

5. *Pick your music.* I love production music. It sets the mood and pace of a show. Taking time to find just the right cut for each segment of the production is worth the extra effort. Remember that on some equipment you can slow or speed the music slightly so that it will fit the tempo of your narration and action exactly.

Rehder's Basic Production Schedule

These steps may be rearranged to suit the needs of your particular slide show project.

Week 1 — Research subject, check stock slide files, and schedule new photography.

Week 2 — Begin new photography, outline script.

Week 3 — Continue new photography.

Week 4 — Continue new photography, refine script outline.

Week 5 — Gather and sort slides, complete script, get approvals.

Week 6 — Select narrator, choose production music cuts, record sound track.

Week 7 — Edit slides and program show.

Week 8 — Preview the show with client and fine-tune for premiere showing.

Don't forget the copyright laws! You shouldn't use any music without the proper clearance.

Most studios offer an extensive library of production music specifically designed for A/V work. Or you may want to buy your own music. You can buy unlimited usage of a piece, or you can buy on a per-use basis.

The advantage of owning a piece outright is that no one else can use it. It's a little distressing to discover, the week before your show premieres, that your lead music is all over the airwaves for a major ad campaign touting Honest George's Auto Salvage!

6. *Record the soundtrack.* At a minimum, a recording studio should be able to provide you with four-track recording. This means the tape recorder can record, individually or simultaneously, four separate tracks. For example, narration can be on Track 1, other voices or special effects can be on Track 2, and music cuts can segue back and forth between Tracks 3 and 4. This master will then be mixed to a tape you will use for your show.

Depending on your playback equipment, the show tape can be mono or stereo, reel-to-reel or cassette. Get two copies so you can have a back-up for emergencies.

7. *Sort and edit your slides.* Usually you'll combine new slides with slides from your stock file. Pull slides that fit your script outline, and shoot new slides to fill the gaps. The number of slides you need depends on the length of the show and the number of projectors you'll be using.

8. *Program your show.* Programming refers to keying the slides to match the audio. You will add inaudible cues to one track of your tape that tell the slide projector(s) when to change the images.

In the past when you used one or two projectors, you cued slide changes on tape by pushing a pulse button on the recorder. This was done while the tape was running the show. It's known as "real-time" programming.

Computer technology has had a great impact on slide shows. Computer-driven slide shows are programmed in "leisure time." This means you set up a series of slide changes on the computer module (my in-house unit is an AVL Coyote three-projector programmer), run the changes, time them to match the audio, then transfer them from the computer's memory to your audio tape.

Since you can time your changes within fractions of a second, intricate slide moves are possible. This capability offers marvelous opportunities for both success and disaster. (After all, if you live by the silicon chip, you can die by it also!)

Actually, I find programming the easiest part of any show. This is where your planning and production efforts pay off. If you allow plenty of time, the final revisions, approvals, and fine-tuning should go smoothly.

Presentation

Showmanship counts during the presentation. What if the audience can see that you have a problem during the presentation? Worse, what if you have to stop and restart the show? Memories of snafus like these can haunt you for a long time.

Here are some tips to avoid glitches:

1. *Scout the presentation site in advance.* It's essential to visit your site well in advance of the show date. Visit with those who will be responsible for setting up the room or hall. You'll certainly have your own checklist, but for a few items to consider, see "Rehder's Basic Presentation Checklist."

2. *Prepare a show kit.* Be ready to clean or repair equipment on the spot. My show kit includes:

- replacement projector lamps,
- a cassette tape splicing block,
- a tape head cleaner,
- extra patchcords,
- a circuit tester,
- extra slide mounts (for that odd slide that suddenly decides not to drop), and
- a small flashlight.

The flashlight is most important. My assistants once cut the lights so quickly I couldn't find the controls. The show got off to a slow start while the audience fidgeted in the dark. Needless to say, now I always keep a flashlight in my pocket.

Rehder's Basic Presentation Checklist

- Where will the audience sit?
- Will you be using front-screen or rear-screen projection?
- Where is the power?
- Will you use your own or a house sound system?
- Where will the head table, stage, podium, and buffet line be located?
- Will daylight be coming through windows, or will there be other uncontrollable light sources?
- What about security? (After all is set up and ready, you certainly won't want some curious soul to start playing around with the equipment!)
- Will you need to rent screens, drapes, a sound system, or other equipment?

3. *Set up the show.* Find out in advance when the site will be available for setup. Allow twice as much time as you think you'll need. Plan to work in a methodical, leisurely fashion. It's easier on your nerves and will help you avoid mistakes. I usually run a Vivaldi tape while I'm setting up.

Allow time to test-run the show two or three times just to make sure every-

thing is working properly. Double-check the lights and the PA system at the same time.

4. *Show time!* When the moment comes, put your flashlight in your pocket, start the show, and pray. Stay right by the projectors during the entire run. You never know when a bulb will blow or a glitch will throw a projector out of sequence. Even though modern computerized systems seem foolproof, anything can happen. I recall once having to advance manually one of six projectors during the first third of a show until it got back on track. (I'll willingly sweat it out to keep the audience from knowing anything is amiss.)

Does this make you think that slide show production is fraught with peril? I hope not. With lots of preparation and a bit of luck, you'll have all you need for a smooth-running show. CASE

The Magnificent 18

A close-up on some reel winners
by Judith G. Myers

Thinking of producing a film or slide show at your institution? Take some tips from those who've done it successfully—our CASE Recognition program winners. We informally surveyed 1983 and 1984 award winners in the slide show and film categories. Here are ideas and experiences from 18 of the 35 winners.

We asked:

- whether their winner was a film or slide show;
- why they chose one or the other;
- whether they used consultants;
- what professional qualities they looked for in consultants;
- what pitfalls they discovered in working with consultants;
- whether they produced in-house, and the advantages and disadvantages of their choice; and
- what they considered the winning elements of their productions.

Top billing for slide shows

Thirteen institutions out of 18 who responded produced slide shows rather than films. The most common reason for this choice was the flexibility of slides. Those who responded feel it's much easier to update or revise slide shows than to make a new film. Slides can also serve double duty as artwork for an institution's publications.

Cost was the second biggest consideration—in most cases, slide shows cost less to produce than films. For example, Penn State University's Department of Agricultural Communications produced its own two-projector, 11-minute slide show for $300. Skidmore College's 24-minute film—produced with an outside consultant—cost $75,000. (Of course, Ag Communications has production facilities on hand, and three staff members spent 320 hours on the production. Not everyone has these in-house resources.) Also, pro-slide show respondents point out that several projectors, backed by a strong soundtrack, can give a film impression at a lower cost.

Those who chose film said they like it because it's easy to carry. And, they say, it's easier to find film projectors than slide show equipment for remote viewings. Many find film easier to project to audiences of more than 30 people. David L. Lendt of Iowa State University notes, "We wanted to show [the production] to large audiences on a large screen (up to 20 or 30 feet wide), and only film resolution would hold up." Several respondents also point to the ease of transferring film to videotape for TV use.

"We believed that we could tell our story best in film because it was to be an emotionally stimulating story showing people and their feelings," says Pamela Perry of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. "To create empathy for their stories would be more easily done with film."

Bill Walker of Skidmore College agrees. He says that film is better than slides for "presenting a dramatic story and all the necessary accompanying visuals" to get the maximum impact.

Critics' choice: Outside consultants

Thirteen out of 18 institutions used outside consultants in some capacity. Many first checked around to get names, called prospective consultants, viewed samples, and interviewed those they liked best.

What qualifications did they look for? Skill, sensitivity, and synthesis, says Roland King, formerly of Bucknell University. "By skill, I mean the technical ability to photograph, photo edit, interview, scriptwrite, mix sound, and so forth. Sensitivity means the ability to adopt the right tone for a specific client and a specific audience in a specific setting. Synthesis is the ability to take divergent input—interviews, background research, visuals—then detect those fine threads that link it all together and make it all make sense."

Others say they looked for experience in higher education, attention to detail, flexibility, and humor.

Another important characteristic: good interpersonal relations. Most want a consultant who has good interviewing skills, especially the ability to listen. Pat Kerley at Brenau College looked for someone who was "highly accessible—never 'tied up with a big job.'" Bryn Mawr's Alexandra Aldridge wanted a consultant without predetermined ideas.

Some hired consultants to direct only a few elements of a production. Clemson University first hired an outside scriptwriter for its slide show. Then, because of time restraints, an outside firm had to produce the soundtrack and provide programming services. According to Clemson's Jane Kidd, the scriptwriter is the key to any slide production. "Our scriptwriter is extremely creative, knowledgeable of the medium, good at understanding and writing for the audience you describe, and willing to look at innovative approaches to the usual alumni pitch," she says.

One respondent cited this drawback of outside consultants. "There were times when I wished [the consult-

Judith G. Myers, a former CURRENTS intern, is a free-lance writer in Potomac, Maryland.

ant] had been on campus for the perfect snowfall, the most colorful fall day," says Jean Van Etten of Hobart and William Smith Colleges. "The bulk of the photography for our two shows was done in a week's time each." However, an outside consultant brings "fresh eyes" and insight, as well as experience and expertise. "We think it's worth it," concludes Van Etten.

Another possible drawback is that you won't be the consultant's only client, says Ron D. Hopper of the Ohio State University Alumni Association. "When using your own staff, you may be able to call the shots a little more authoritatively."

You can't assume that outside consultants will do all the work, either. According to Thomas P. Lake of Johns Hopkins University, his staff spent quite a bit of time gathering historical data for Johns Hopkins' film. This material included documents, photos, figures, quotable quotes, even the original will of Johns Hopkins himself. "Needless to say, you should be on good terms with your college or university archivists," Lake says.

Lake and his staff also spent time arranging film shots. "Filming time is expensive," he advises, "so have all of your subjects and locales prepared for the shooting. Site visits from your director before the filming will help eliminate any unexpected glitches."

Some mixed reviews

Not all the acclaim went to outside consultants. "There is an air of warmth, homeyness, and believability in many in-house productions that is sadly missing from some of the high-powered, high-priced shows," says King. Having produced slide shows both with and without a consultant, he concludes that in-house production can sometimes move faster by simplifying the approval process. And it is always less expensive.

Familiarity with the university's goals and programs, its campus, and the town is another benefit of in-house production, maintains the University of Colorado's Leslie Aaholm.

Also, you maintain control—over quality, content, deadlines. The biggest disadvantage of using outside consultants, says Penn State's Steven Williams, "is that [they] command respect from a client often only because they are being paid. In-house producers, on the other hand, must [because of client familiarity with them] fight more to convince clients."

Secrets of the stars

What were the award-winning elements of these productions? According to those responding: editing, narration, photography, script, picture/sound synchronization, subject matter, and music.

An unusual script won the day for Penn State, says Williams. "Nothing is more boring for an audience than to be able to predict what is going to happen next," he says. "Our approach was to make fun of the expected and reinforce the main points in unexpected ways."

For example, instead of having student voices in the soundtrack say stuffy, puffy things about the College of Agriculture (expected), students mimicked barnyard animals (unexpected). This disarming approach engaged the audience and surely made them wonder how this show could promote Penn State agriculture. Indirectly, of course, it did. Throughout the show, students play devil's advocate and ask the tough questions about the college that real prospective students would ask.

Many respondents pointed to a combination of factors. For example, King says you really can't pick out a winning element. "It's a little like a music critic detailing in a symphony orchestra review which parts of the orchestra played best. If they don't work together, they don't work. I'd like to think all of the winners established a good balance of individually strong components." CASE

Section 8

Advertising: Building Awareness in Your Market

Before You Advertise

First, know your institution and your market
by Dorothy Durkin

Advertising is an important part of any marketing strategy. A well-planned advertising campaign can increase public awareness and reinforce the positive attitudes of your current students toward your program. But don't expect a single advertisement to perform miracles. It cannot sell a deficient program or a program no one wants. Nor can one ad draw students away from successful programs elsewhere.

Before you call the local paper or radio station to place an ad, you should develop an overall communications strategy, identifying the goals you hope to achieve through promotion efforts.

Positioning your institution

The first step is to know your college's objectives and to decide if advertising might support those objectives. You need to answer the following questions:

- Have you achieved identification and awareness in your marketplace or has increased competition diminished your visibility?
- Do you want to capitalize on current strengths by promoting profitable programs? Or do you want to maintain or develop areas with lower income potential because they serve special needs and provide a balanced curriculum? Or do you need to do both?
- Does your institution have areas of potential growth? Can advertising help those areas?
- Where enrollments are declining, has your competition's share of the market also decreased? Can you increase enrollment through better program identification or additional promotion?

Reaching the right people

Next, you'll need to have a firm grasp of what you want the advertising to accomplish and whom you want it to reach. These questions will help to clarify your thinking:

- Is your goal in advertising to expand enrollments in current areas, to maintain enrollments, or to attract interest in a new program?
- Can you identify the characteristics (demographics) of current or potential students?
- Can you identify students' motivations (psychographics) for joining a program?
- Can you use what you've learned about psychographics to reach a larger audience of similar people?
- Are the audience characteristics well enough defined to make a difference in which media you select? Is the audience so specialized that advertising is a less efficient method of promotion than direct mail? Are there specialized publications in which you might economically test an ad?
- Does the projected enrollment and income for the program justify advertising costs?

Your marketing strategy

As you answer the questions above, the basic parts of your marketing plan should begin to emerge. Your aim is to use your promotion budget efficiently so that it serves both its retail goal of recruiting more students as well as its institutional goal of increasing public awareness of your programs.

You should view the special needs of each area that requires promotion as well as how that area fits into your overall marketing plan. Ideally, specialized efforts should reinforce that plan.

If your programs have wide appeal, advertising in the major media is probably the most effective way of reaching a broad audience. Good graphics, strong headlines, and repetition are important elements of a successful advertising campaign. Use large space insertions and a strong logo to help your ads stand out on cluttered pages.

For programs appealing to a specialized audience, you need to try a more targeted approach. Does your budget permit separate coverage through ads or brochures? In some cases, advertising in special sections of newspapers or magazines may work. If you have suitable mailing lists available, it may be more efficient to reach those groups through a direct mail piece. Also, remember that radio can often target economic, ethnic, and other groups better than newspapers.

To find out how your ads pull, record responses by coding coupons and then trace conversions (the number of people requesting information who ultimately register). All program areas will not draw the same responses to advertisements. Some appeals are weaker because the market share is smaller. Sometimes responses are high, but conversions are few. In this case, your response piece may not have served the prospect or answered questions. Or perhaps your product needs to be reviewed—it may not have delivered what it promised. Try modifying your appeal to increase the conversion rate.

Your programs may derive even greater benefit from other recruitment tools. For example, students who are interested in programs that require more guidance should be invited to the campus rather than just sent a brochure. Hold a special advisement day for selected program areas each semester. It may prove to be your most successful recruitment tool.

What can ads achieve?

Advertising can provide a foundation to attract large numbers of new prospects to your programs. Sporadic ads that do not build on a campaign theme will usually not be effective. Strive, instead, to develop continuity and to build your message through repetition.

Never disregard former students in order to invest more dollars in recruiting new people. With today's emphasis on lifelong learning, former students are often your best prospects. Keep sending them your catalog and other mailings.

Advertising is just one part of your promotion mix, but it can help you communicate your message to a broad audience and achieve the identification you need in the marketplace. cnse

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Why I Hate Educational Advertising and Use It All the Time

by Stephen L. Goldstein

I used to hate advertising. When I became director of information services at the University of Maryland University College, I thought that our advertising made education look cheap. And I doubted that it really worked.

You've heard it before. Many faculty members and administrators don't like to see their institution run ads. Advertising seems blatant, self-serving, commercial, competitive, overstated, glib, embarrassing, and potentially misleading. Many of them think that a campus that stoops to advertise is desperate for students and probably educationally unsound.

You may feel the same way—but I'd like to change your mind. I still don't like advertising, but I've found that it can be an effective part of an institution's image-building and student recruitment efforts. Why? Because it works.

And although my experience has been in advertising credit and noncredit programs for adults, what I have learned can be helpful to your institution, too.

Advertising works because:

• *When you advertise you are in control of a powerful part of your external communications.* This is no small accomplishment. Your institution cannot afford to be at the mercy of the media. No one can guarantee that a reporter will write what you consider important about your institution. Nor can you be certain that even a favorable feature will be printed, or that a public service announcement will be broadcast.

But you do have things to say about your institution that prospective students and the general public need to know. Don't leave that communication to chance. Advertisements are guaranteed press releases. They can complement noncommercial publicity.

• *Advertising costs less than you may think.* Although there's no fail-safe formula, you can estimate that, using different media, you can reach "y" numbers of people between certain ages for about "x" dollars.

Here's one way to calculate your costs, just to get a feel for the power of the advertising dollar. Call a local radio or TV station or a newspaper and ask for an estimate of the potential number of people you can reach with your message in just one 60-second spot at different times of the day. Ask the cost.

Then calculate how many staffers you would need working for how long at how much to reach even a fraction of that number with that message, by telephone. You'll see that as a means of communicating with a large audience, advertising is economical.

• *You can establish an image for your institution quickly if you advertise with intensity and consistency.* The message you want will reach an audience as often as your budget allows.

• *Advertising—particularly on radio and TV, in magazines, and through direct mail— allows you to target your audience when you want to.* For instance, if you know a certain magazine appeals to 13- to 18-year-olds, you can tailor your message to that readership when it will do you the most good.

• *Advertising allows you to be flexible in timing.* Of course, if you plan your advertising properly, you don't call in ads the day before they're to run. But to place an ad you don't have to go through any editorial arm-twisting to have it appear at the best time for you.

• *If you plan an advertising campaign well, the dollars you spend for advertising can double as dollars spent for ongoing market research.* Get the names and addresses of everyone who calls or writes in response to advertising. Find out where they first heard about your programs, what they want to study, and if they applied and enrolled. Fed into a computer this information can serve as the basis for measuring the effectiveness of your advertising. The data can also help you to analyze your potential market when you need to plan future strategies.

By this time, even if you agree that advertising sounds okay, you are probably asking, "Who's going to do it?" Some institutions go right out and hire an agency. That's wrong as a starter. Some institutions think that they can't afford an agency. That's wrong, too.

Don't use an agency unless your staff includes someone with some, even minimal, expertise. And if you don't have someone, get someone—or teach someone.

Use an agency as a resource, not as a panacea. Be sure to stay on the lookout for your institution's interests. No matter how much you are spending on advertising, it's peanuts compared with most commercial ad budgets. Find an agency that cares about little accounts.

Whether you use an agency or put together the advertising campaign yourself, try to avoid five common "don'ts":

1. *Don't advertise by committee.* Committees can't write ad copy and they can't make advertising decisions. No ad can ever appeal to everyone—and certainly not to a motley crew of deans, department heads, and professors.

Advertising should appeal to the market that you are trying to reach, not to individual egos. Don't be surprised if a 60-year-old faculty member doesn't like an ad that is supposed to appeal to 18-year-olds. The danger comes when the 60-year-old thinks that his or her taste should determine what you say in your advertising and how you say it.

Instead of advertising by committee,

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advertise by good judgment. Get the ideas and perceptions of everyone about everything that relates to your institution. Use personal interviews. Do surveys.

For example, ask current students what they consider to be good and bad about the college. Ask prospective students how they perceive the institution and what they really want to know about it. Try to find out why they want to go to college in the first place. Ask test panels for their reactions to the kinds of ads you'd like to run. In short, write ads *for* your market, not *to* your market. Leave final decisions about your advertising up to someone who knows—an advertising expert.

2. *Don't let individual schools, units, or departments advertise on their own.* If you do, you'll have chaos. Establish a coordinated plan for advertising that carries out the goals of your institution. See that the plan takes into account the special needs of all institutional units. Agree upon a common theme and a recognizable visual format. And if you do nothing else, establish a central advertising budget. Determine the budget on the basis of previously agreed-upon goals—and the resources needed to accomplish them.

3. *Don't succumb to a "monkey see, monkey do" syndrome.* Assume that unless your friends, relatives, and neighbors are competent media buyers, they know nothing about buying media time. Therefore, you have no business listening to their advice. In some instances, people may tell you to advertise in a certain medium because another institution has done it. If you set out to follow your competition, you'll never get ahead of it.

In media-buying, be professional. If you don't know everything there is to know, learn from agency people or consultants. Most of all, always assess what you have done. Choose media 75 percent on the basis of facts and figures, 20 percent on the basis of your previous experience, and 5 percent on gut reaction.

4. *Don't advertise just to advertise.* Know why you are advertising in the first place. Set objectives that you can measure. Do before and after awareness studies to find out if your advertising makes a difference. And be sure to set up the studies so that your advertising returns valuable marketing information that you can use.

5. *Don't panic if you don't have instant success.* Advertising builds over a long period of time. At Maryland, we have been advertising systematically for nearly four years. If we didn't run an ad for a year and a half, we would still be getting results from all of our past advertising. Stick to your plan. Be consistent.

Some people think that quality sells itself—in the same way that virtue is its own reward and that the meek shall inherit the earth. I don't agree. The more people who receive word of your college, the more "customers" you'll get. You can't sell something unless people know about it.

I think that educational advertising at its best is nothing more or less than good communication. Business and industry around the world spend staggering amounts of money on ad campaigns. Businesses stay afloat because their ads work. Our campuses need to stay in business, and we have something to sell. So why not consider advertising? It will pay off. And you may just learn to like it. ens

Test Advertising Results

by Stephen L. Goldstein

Higher education is in the advertising marketplace. Almost every day you can see newspaper ads for college and university programs. Many of us in higher education are already sold on the value of advertising, especially for programs in continuing education. So instead of just debating its values, I'll give some simple suggestions for getting all you can for your advertising dollar. These common-sense pointers may mean the difference between advertising that stabs in the dark and promotion that has a purpose.

To get the most from your advertising you should keep track of and analyze your results. You can do constant market analysis without having to start a full-fledged research department. For example, when you answer requests for information from the people who respond to your ads, you should take the opportunity to retrieve from them, efficiently and accurately, every bit of information you can. Then, in the quiet (if you have any) between promotional periods, you can test the effectiveness of your strategy and assess the strength of your programs.

At the University of Maryland University College, we advertise extensively our adult continuing education programs. The following plan helps us keep track of and evaluate results so that we can develop future promotion. You can adapt these suggestions to suit your own advertising campaign.

We keep a special form near the phones in our offices to remind us to record at least the name, address, and phone number of everyone who calls, as well as to request other information. In order to judge the short- and long-term effectiveness of our advertising, we ask people where they first learned about our programs.

We also ask what courses people are interested in, so we can be alert to new programs for which there are markets. To figure out about how long it takes a person to decide to enroll, we keep track of the date of inquiry. And we always ask if he or she is new to University College.

We make certain that callers always receive answers. Even after normal business hours and on weekends, we prefer to have a staff member handy to answer the phones. At other times, we use a recording device that allows callers to leave names, addresses, and phone numbers. The recorded voice asks callers to tell us where they heard about the program. Since many people are somewhat put off by answering devices, we try to make our messages distinctive, even humorous. These recordings are effective attention-getters and tend to ease people into leaving word.

We try to keep track of everything. We code our newspaper and magazine coupons so that, when we receive

them in our office, we know exactly where they come from. When designing direct mail brochures, we code coupons for specific mailings.

To determine how to place newspaper ads for the greatest effect, we keep a daily log of responses to ads. This tells us when and where to advertise—right down to the paper, section, page, and day. By doing the same for direct mailings, we can determine their lifespans.

In radio and TV promotion, we record the time as well as the day of each response. (By having rotating phone lines, we can handle the spurts of calls that come in after the spots run.) We review our time records to see when to place our ads for the greatest return.

Our new telephone follow-up system also enables us to determine if information is going out to people who seriously want to and who are able to enroll in our programs. About 10 days after someone requests information, we call back to make sure the material arrived and to answer any additional questions. In this way, we can see if the caller's interest is real.

At registration, we ask new students to write on a form how they first heard about our program.

After you have planned a good advertising campaign and have faithfully kept track of your results, you are ready to test those results.

We collect the names of the thousands of people who respond to our advertising. Since enrolled students automatically receive university information, we check the new names against our registration lists and clean our list. Then we follow up on those who haven't enrolled.

We put their names in a computer to prepare mailing labels. We now have a computer program that allows us to code a variety of information. This new system speeds up considerably the statistical analysis upon which we count. We can code for the date of inquiry, the educational status of the caller, the kinds of courses that interest him or her, and how the person first heard of our programs. Now, if we never ask our callers anything else, we'll still know enough about them to answer some of the questions that puzzle us.

Another way we stay in business is by asking those people who didn't register why they didn't. Based on a random selection, we send out a survey to find out what we must do to provide these potential students with the educational opportunities they want. We must make sure that our advertising reaches potential students and that our programs keep pace with the educational needs of the community. It is important to find out what barriers stand between someone's desire for education and our ability to supply it.

It takes light-years before a person responding to advertising becomes a statistic in a market survey. But such surveys allow us to assess the educational futures of thousands of individuals. Through advertising we can reach our prime public, but only if we test the results it brings us. **cnse**

Ten Commandments of Advertising

by Ed Ziegler

Your enrollment is declining and all of a sudden you have a large advertising budget. Only three people have registered for that big seminar, and you rush to the advertising department of the local paper. How do you do it? Don't just drop it all in the lap of the first advertising agency you see. Educational advertising is not very complicated, and if you follow these basic rules, your advertising will rival that of Madison Avenue for economy and effectiveness.

1. Advertising alone is not going to fill your classes or guarantee a packed house for that seminar. Advertising will create an awareness that a product or service exists, but it will not create the need. People will attend your institution because it has an excellent reputation, or because their past experience there was pleasant, or because you offer something they need. They will *not* participate because you have a nice ad, but because your product (school, college, or university) produces.

We proved this concept by charting the number of times each department placed an ad or was mentioned in a house ad. Two programs that suffered a substantial loss in enrollment had received the most publicity. But one program that had not received any publicity surpassed its enrollment projections. This prompted us to advise departments to evaluate their course offerings in terms of student needs before drawing up promotional plans.

Don't let anyone use the excuse that a program was a failure because it wasn't advertised enough. That might be true, but more often the program was not filling a need. Good advertising uses attractive design to advertise a well-planned educational program.

2. Check with newspapers and other media to see if they have special nonprofit or school and college rates. Also check on contracts which can save money if your volume is high enough. If you want the ad on a specific page, the price is usually higher. But if you obey commandment 10 below, you will usually get the choice spots at no extra cost. Some papers have special repeat rates that are real bargains. Rates are based on circulation, so get to know each paper's coverage area. Don't pay for unneeded readers.

3. Through surveys or interviews, determine the effect of your advertising. Find out which type of student is attracted by which media and where the bulk of registrants come from. You can also determine which aspect (cost, programs, location, and so forth) of

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your program draws the most for use in future ads. The results will also indicate which newspapers draw best. It is not always the larger ones. Don't be caught in the trap of advertising in the larger paper or station because you believe it gives you more prestige. If your budget is limited (whose isn't?), a small ad in a sea of large professional ads is a waste of money. But the same ad in a less prestigious but widely read weekly may offer better results.

There are other considerations besides immediate results for entering a certain market. For example, you might want to build up credibility in a certain academic area that may result in funds or full-time students in the future.

But my research has found that, for immediate results, nothing beats your local daily paper. The $700 we spent on a series of radio spots for summer registration drew only one new student. Yet the $100 spent on ads in two local daily newspapers attracted 23 new students. Your own surveys will help you determine which combination of media will work best for you.

4. It helps to spread your advertising around a little. Many of the small newspapers push the advertising. The larger newspapers aren't as blatant, but don't neglect them. Choose the medium that will give you the best coverage for your money.

Many large papers with huge coverage areas have zoned editions that allow you to focus on an area. The cost is reduced substantially but you still receive the coverage. This is also true in television where you can advertise either locally or nationally.

5. Make sure the individual or department placing the ad has the money to pay for it. Use whatever system is available (requisitions, purchase orders, etc.) to prevent the embarrassment of unpaid bills. A sales representative will put up with almost anything except an unpaid account.

6. You should handle all contact with the media concerning advertising. You don't have to design the ad, but you should place it. Meet sales representatives personally and ask them to refuse an ad from your institution unless it comes from you. This will make it easier; the bills will come to your office and you'll know which department placed which ad. This will prevent the widespread practice of sending a bill from office to office until it reaches the right one.

7. Always call and double-check the rate with the sales representative before sending the ad. The rates may change without notice. Make sure you both agree on particulars. Then send a cover letter, the copy, and rough layout, marked as clearly as possible.

Send copy enough in advance so you can get proofs. Don't trust a salesperson to check copy. You can specify typefaces if you want, but with some papers you may be asking for trouble. (The secret is to know your papers.)

8. Before using an advertising agency, check your own resources to see if you can do the same thing and do it cheaper. If not, consult the agency's clients to see if they are satisfied. There are good agencies and bad, so choose carefully.

If you do use an agency, you can usually save money by having them prepare the ad. But you should place the ad if you have contracts or can get nonprofit rates at certain papers (see commandment 2). Some agencies might even consider giving you back the 15 percent commission they receive from the papers for placing the ad. You will have to determine which method is the most economical.

9. You can use artwork or clip-art, as long as the artwork doesn't overpower the message. Some papers add an engraving charge for pictures or for reducing or enlarging artwork. There is usually no charge for artwork used 100 percent (shot at the same size). Many larger newspapers have make-up departments that will design an ad for you as a free service, but, like everything else, you get what you pay for.

A radio spot can be prerecorded, or you can have the announcer read it over the air. I would suggest the latter method, because the announcer will invariably spend more time on the spot than you've paid for. And if your ad is clever, he or she might try to have fun with it, giving your spot added impact.

Television spots have to be produced, and this adds considerably to the cost. An inexpensive way is a color slide or two with a script which a station announcer will read.

10. The relationship you build with the salesperson will be your biggest advantage and best safeguard. Don't give him or her a bad time over minor problems, but *do* keep the salesperson honest. If you see to it that bills are paid and that copy is sent in advance, and if you back the representative up when he or she won't place a late ad, you will be repaid handsomely with excellent placements, careful ad make-up, and a good reputation with the whole medium. It never hurts to have a friend in the media.

These commandments have been developed from two years of research and interviews with sales representatives of large and small newspapers and radio and TV stations in the Philadelphia-South Jersey area. The deplorable condition of our institutional advertising motivated us. Much more than theory or statistical interpretations, these methods have proven effective in developing a successful advertising program for us. CASE